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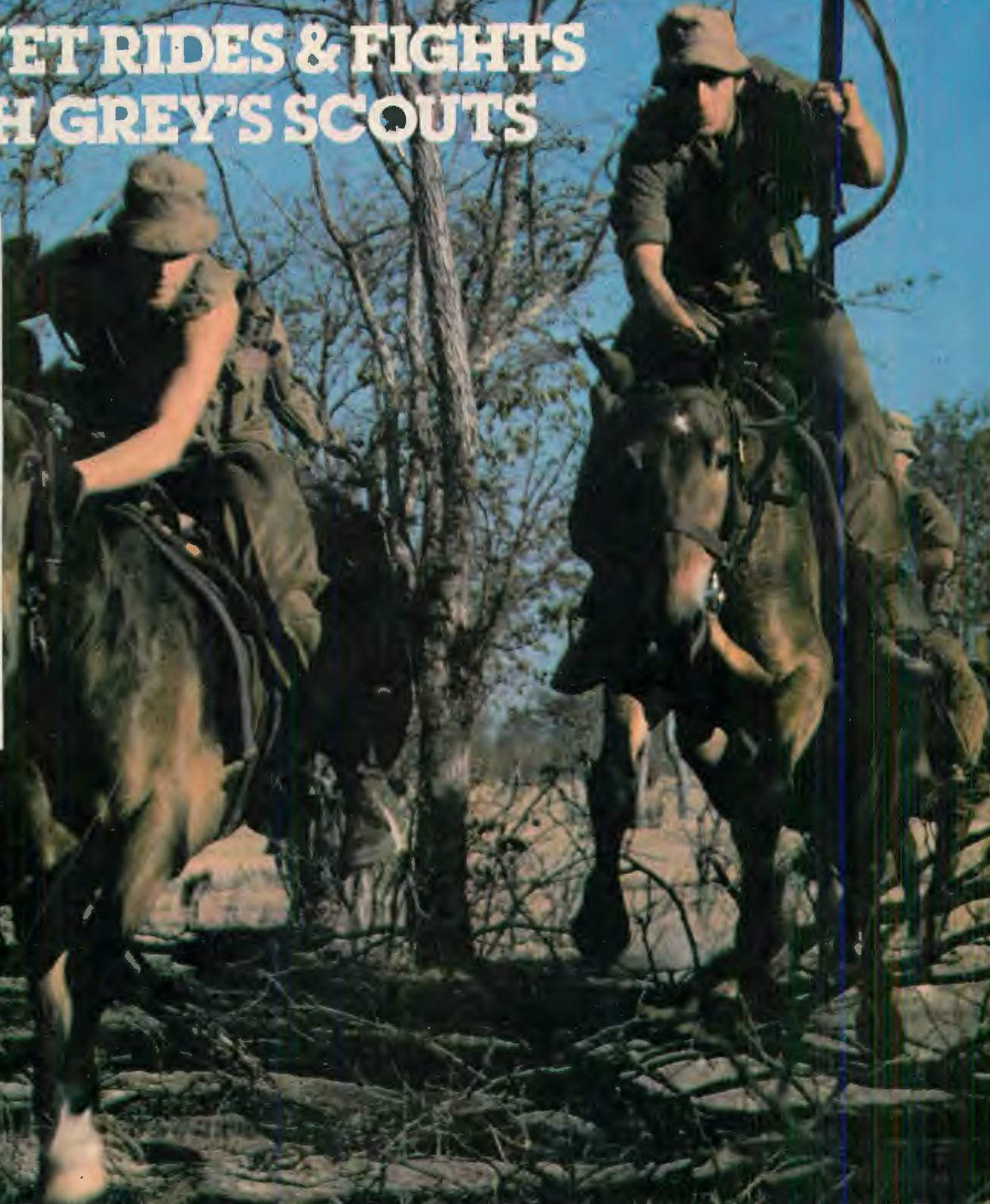
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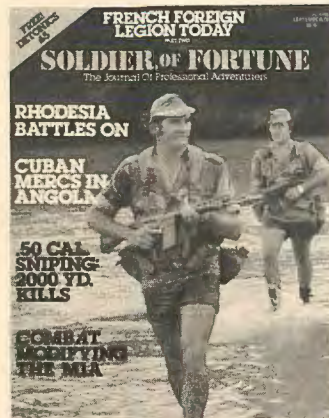
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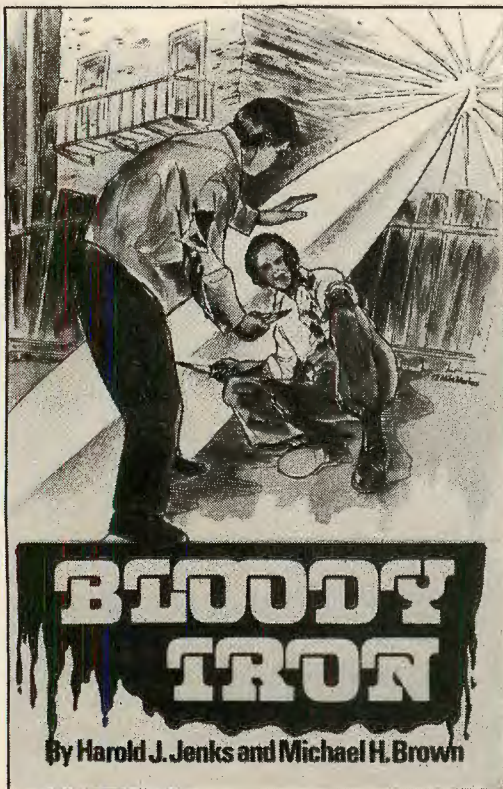
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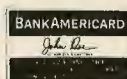
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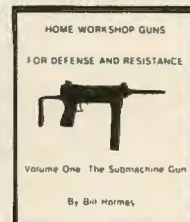
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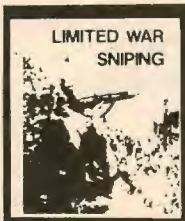
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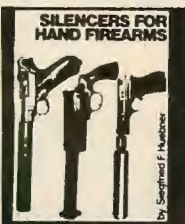


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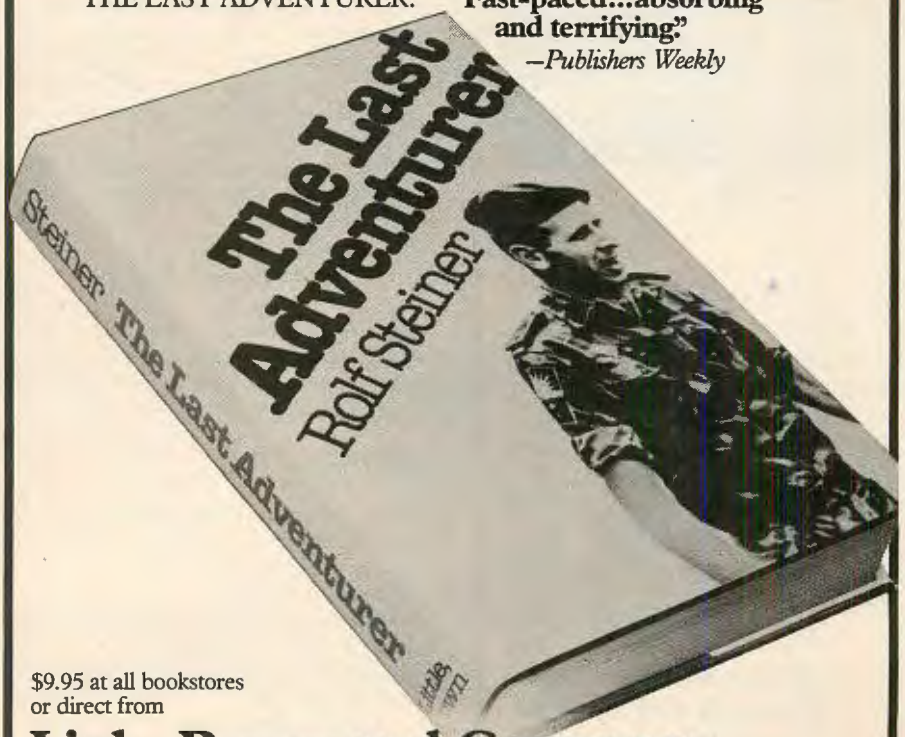
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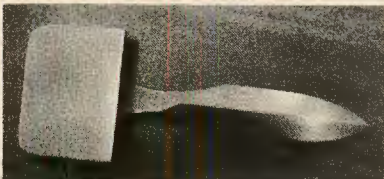
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# FLAK



## VOLUNTEER ARMY'S A LOSER ...

Dear Editor:

I am concerned that you have not done a report on America's volunteer Army. It is my opinion that it wouldn't fight its way out of a wet pizza.

Your magazine is the last defense of the patriot in this nation. Myself, I have been labeled a revolutionary, Marxist, Nazi, extremist, because I believe as Zapata stated years ago, "it's better to die on your feet than live on your knees."

Your magazine is to be congratulated for telling the true nature of the South Africa and Rhodesian problem. When the chaos comes to this nation I hope you have one printing press left in operation in order to say I told you so.

Sincerely,  
Charles B. Tiffany  
Kissimmee, Florida

## MIA TYPO CAUGHT ...

Gentlemen:

As you know, you put out one hell of a mag. So far, I have no complaints. But in the latest issue (September 1978) on page 80, "This taper is accom-"; cont'd. p. 84: "contact with the suppressor when it is crooked." Somehow, I have the feeling that one line (or more) was dropped. Can you give me the missing line(s)???

Thanks,  
Bob Johnson  
North Hollywood, California

*Thanks for catching our error. The missing lines are: "plished with a No. 7 taper reamer, a modification which prevents the round from".—The Eds.*

## THIRD HERD ...

Sirs:

Wish to contact those who served in Vietnam with the:

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Thank you,  
Roy A. Rodriguez  
Box 263  
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## OVERSEAS PRAISE ...

Dear Colonel Brown:

I have just read the May issue of SOF and found it better than ever. The article on the Ingram MAC 10 was excellent. You can tell Chuck Taylor that our S.A.S. also use the M10, in both .45 and 9mm, complete with Sionics unit. One was used recently in Northern Ireland by a plain-clothes S.A.S. trooper on surveillance duties. Two P.I.R.A. terrorists approached his car, produced a pistol and ordered him out. His M10 was on his lap, and he fired through the car door on full-chat, almost cutting the terr in half and taking out his mate too! They also use the HK MP5SD.

Dana Drenkowski's article from Rhodesia and Jeff Cooper's were also first class. Keep up the good work.

Best wishes and DVC,  
Dennis Martin  
Liverpool, England

## LEGION TYPO ...

Dear Sir:

I read with considerable interest the article by William Brooks, "The French Foreign Legion Today," in your issue of July 1978. Several points of the article bothered me but the reference to "Cameroun" ... was the last straw. It is not possible that a real Legionnaire would spell "Camerone" incorrectly!

I hope that the work of Brooks is original but a reader of his article cannot help but be reminded of such books as *The Horrors of the Foreign Legion* and *The Living Hell of the Legion*, which were originally published in Germany in the 1900s. Those books, too, tended to dwell on the filthy living conditions in the Legion barracks and the excessive use of alcohol. One wonders, how did those dirty drunken bums win all those battles? ...

Best wishes,  
Bill Dudley  
Las Vegas, Nevada

*Our proof reader goofed—but we caught the error this time (see Part 3, "The French Foreign Legion Today"). To your second question, would you believe fighting, dirty, drunken bums?—The Eds.*

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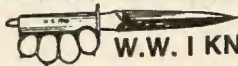
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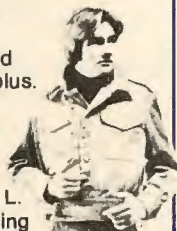


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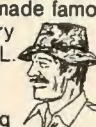


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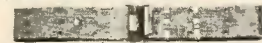
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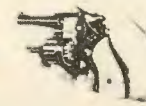
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## CUBANS AND POWs . . .

Sirs:

. . . More on the Cubans who tortured American POWs in Vietnam (SOF, May 1978): The two Cubans shown in the pictures in Truby's article, the man and woman, were "journalists" named Raul Valdes Vivo and Marta Rojas. They were at the VC area headquarters in Tay Ninh Province in October '65 where they saw several U.S. POWs. . . . The POWs seen seated opposite them in one picture may be PFC Crafts, Cpt. Schumman, and Major Cook. Crafts was released in early '67. Schumman and Cook both died in

their camps, rather than compromise their ideals to communist propaganda. When ordered to sign a propaganda statement, Cook refused. A VC officer placed the barrel of a captured American .45 against his head and threatened to shoot. Cook calmly began to describe the weapon and its nomenclature, functions, and capabilities. The VC officer became infuriated and Cook was beaten.

What Col. Bomar says about "Fidel" and "Chico" is correct. They arrived at the Zoo in August '67 and left in August '68. Fidel at first did not use torture, only mental pressure. Our POWs thwarted his

plans by their courage and resistance, and Fidel was so enraged he initiated one of the most horrible campaigns to torture the 12 POWs selected and known as the Fidel 12. Col. Cobiel was beaten into a catatonic state as a result. Other POWs pleaded to have him sent home by the North Vietnamese where he could receive expert treatment. In return, the POWs promised silence. . . . The VC refused and isolated Cobiel. He survived until the early '70s when he withered away and died. His body has since been returned.

What the Fidel 12 and other POWs endured in Vietnam is almost beyond human endurance. . . . And now we hear words like normalization. There are still Americans who were positively captured that no one knows what happened to. . . . Perhaps they are still enduring tortures by Communist allies.

I know these facts and look at our world today: our great apathy. It makes me sick.

Sincerely,  
T.Z. Bosiljevac  
Emporia, Kansas

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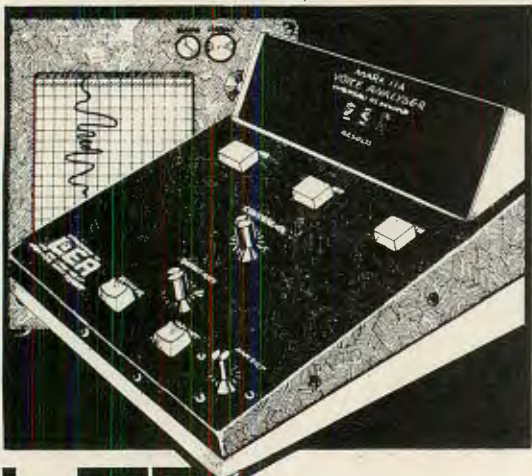
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## ANTI-GUN LAWS . . .

. . . . You guys in the States are still lucky as far as auto weapons are concerned, although some states have very restrictive laws concerning MGs and SMGs.

However, these restrictions are nothing in comparison to the current Canadian "Gun Laws" . . . . As of January 1, 1978, all semi autos, rifles with a barrel less than 18½ inches long, are restricted weapons and possession of such without proper registration is punishable by a five-year imprisonment. These "new laws" concern all center fire semi-autos—all M1 carbines, AR-15s, AR-180s, H&K 91s and 93s—all semi-auto Valmets, etc. . . .

. . . . Once you took your weapon to the cops, they kept it there and you found yourself on a merryground, as in my case and several buddies of mine, who tried to get the permit for a restricted firearm. . . . Altogether we had something like \$4,000.00 worth of guns confiscated without any compensation. So much for gun control which is meant to hurt law-abiding gun enthusiasts and allow the guns in the hands of police and criminals. . . .

. . . . Please, I beg of you, you members of NRA and other gun buff organizations, DON'T let any gun "control" laws become reality; they don't hurt the criminals but legitimate, law-abiding gun owners. . . . I myself am heading for South Africa as soon as I can sell my belongings. Canada stinks of socialism and the stink is getting stronger.

Best regards,  
Jerry G. Skoviera  
Toronto, Ontario, Canada



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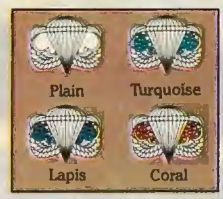
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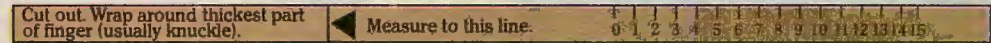
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# Bulletin Board

## ANTI-GUN CLUB . . .

We are grateful to The Weekly Bullet, a weekly newsletter published by High Caliber Communications, Inc., P.O. Box 1682, Bellevue, WA 98009 (\$25.00 per year), for providing us with a list of names of Congressmen who voted in favor of the BATF's proposed gun registration regulations. We suggest you look for any of your representatives. If you find one, let him know how you feel about his vote. And, with elections very near, keep their votes in mind when choosing whom you will vote for in the elections. The Congressmen are as follows:

J. Addabbo (D-NY)	R. McClory (D-IL)
J. Anderson (R-IL)	A. Maguire (D-NJ)
T. Ashley (D-OH)	E. J. Markey (D-MA)
E. P. Beard (D-RI)	R. L. Mazzoli (D-KY)
J. Bingham (D-NY)	R. H. Metcalfe (D-IL)
R. Bolling (D-MO)	A. B. Mikva (D-IL)
D. E. Bonior (D-MI)	G. Miller (D-CA)
J. B. Brademas (D-LA)	N. Y. Mineta (D-CA)
W. M. Brodhead (D-MI)	P. Mitchell (D-MD)
P. Burton (D-CA)	J. Moakley (D-MA)
S. Chisholm (D-NY)	A. T. Moffett (D-CT)
W. Clay (D-MO)	J. E. Moss (D-CA)
C. Collins (D-IL)	M. Murphy (D-IL)
J. Conyers (D-MI)	R. Nolan (D-MN)
J. L. Corman (D-CA)	R. L. Ottinger (D-NJ)
J. J. Delaney (D-NY)	J. Pritchard (R-WA)
E. J. Derwinski (R-IL)	C. B. Rangel (D-NY)
C. C. Diggs (D-MI)	F. W. Richmond (D-NY)
C. J. Dodd (D-CT)	B. S. Rosenthal (D-NY)
T. J. Downey (D-NY)	D. Rostenkowski (D-IL)
R. F. Drinan (D-MA)	M. Russo (D-IL)
R. W. Edgar (D-PA)	L. J. Ryan (D-CA)
D. Edwards (D-CA)	J. H. Shuler (D-NY)
J. N. Erlenborn (R-IL)	P. Schroeder (D-CO)
F. E. Evans (D-CO)	J. F. Seiberling (D-OH)
D. B. Fascell (D-FL)	S. J. Solarz (D-NY)
M. Fenwick (R-NJ)	F. J. St. Germain (D-RI)
D. M. Fraser (D-MN)	F. H. Stark (D-CA)
R. Garcia (D-NY)	N. I. Steers (R-MD)
H. B. Gonzalez (D-TX)	L. Stokes (D-OH)
S. Green (R-NY)	G. E. Studds (D-MA)
M. Harrington (D-MA)	F. Thompson (D-NJ)
H. E. Harris (D-VA)	P. E. Tsongas (D-MA)
A. Hawkins (D-CA)	L. Van Deerlin (D-CA)
C. Hefelt (D-HI)	C. A. Vanik (D-OH)
E. Holtzman (D-NY)	T. S. Weiss (D-NY)
B. Jordan (D-TX)	C. W. Whalen (R-OH)
R. Kastenmeier (D-WI)	C. E. Wiggins (R-CA)
R. L. Leggett (D-CA)	L. L. Wolff (D-NY)
W. Lehman (D-FL)	S. R. Yates (D-IL)

The editors of SOF found The Weekly Bullet to contain the most factual, timely information available about the gun issue, and we urge readers to support them in their efforts to get the news out to the public.

## C.A.F. PRO BREAKS JUMP RECORD

Confederate Air Force parachutist "Colonel" John A. Berke set a national jump record for "ram air" canopies when he completed 90 jumps in one day, between official sunrise and sunset on 22 April 1978. His first jump began at 0518 hours and the 90th was completed at 1831 hours, dodging inclement weather during the action. The CAF, dedicated to the preservation of flyable World War II aircraft, has a fast-growing Airborne Division of enthusiasts who wish to preserve the equipment, uniforms and tactics of famed Allied and Axis WWII units.

The Confederate Airborne Division will re-enact Allied and Axis airborne assaults at the annual CAF "Airsho" at Harlington, Texas, October 1978. The Airborne Division will run a jump school several days in advance of Airsho '78 for persons interested in jumping—cost is \$25.00. Readers are urged to contact Col John A. Berke, Jr., Courtland Square, 3401 Louisiana Street, Ste. 440, Houston, TX 77002.

## CIA MERC LAWSUIT . . .

SOF magazine would like to contact American mercs, SOF's, volunteers, CIA employees, or individuals having knowledge of the above who were involved in the Angolan war in 1975-1976. Please contact Editor, SOF, Box 693, Boulder, Colorado 80306; Attn: Angola.

Bill Wilson, one of the attorneys who defended Daniel Gearhart and the other Americans tried and executed by the MPLA in Angola, is suing the CIA on behalf of Gearhart's widow. Wilson claims the CIA was responsible for briefing the merc leaders in a CIA safe-house, that the CIA failed to warn them they were walking into a death trap (into an area the CIA knew was already lost), and that they were flown into Angola in a CIA piloted aircraft.

## ASIAN NEWS . . .

For news on Asia you might check out a magazine entitled ASIAWEEK. Order from ASIAWEEK, The Asian News Weekly, Federal Building, 369 Lockhart Road, Hong Kong. Rates: \$47.00/yr., \$27/½ yr.

## VIETNAM NEWS . . .

A very interesting bi-weekly newsletter, "Vietnam News," is available from The American Vietnamese Association of Virginia and Vicinity, P.O. Box 45, Leesburg, Virginia 22075. Subscription rates are: \$12/yr.; \$6/6 months.

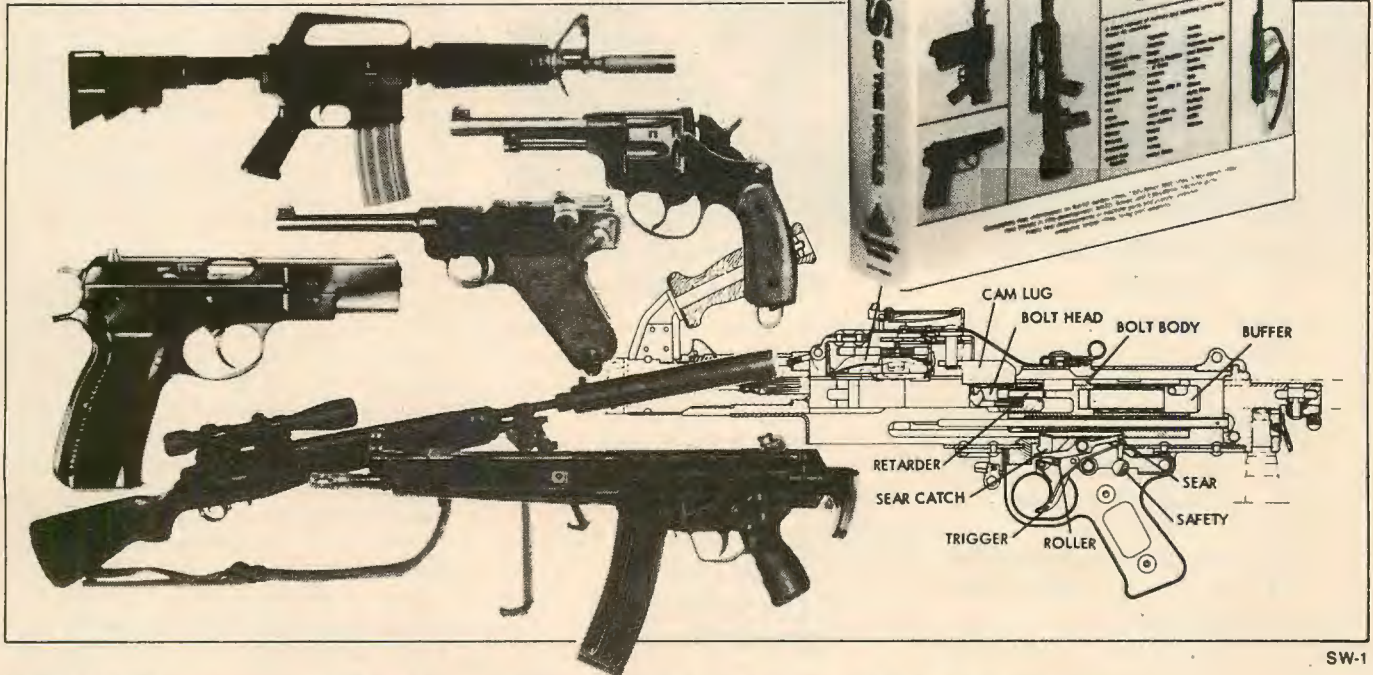
## BLOOD ON THEIR HANDS . . .

All sources, including the Communists under Cambodian Premier Pol Pot, agree that the total Cambodian population at the time the Communists took over in mid-1975 was 7½ million people. Eighty to 100,000 Cambodians have become refugees since the Reds took over. Various independent sources have reported over a million Cambodians killed by the Reds since the takeover in mid-1975.

Now we have confirmation from the Cambodian Reds themselves that indirectly confirms the executions/forced starvations: Premier Pol Pot has on several

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placed entirely by a new generation of small sub-  
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Colt .45 auto.*

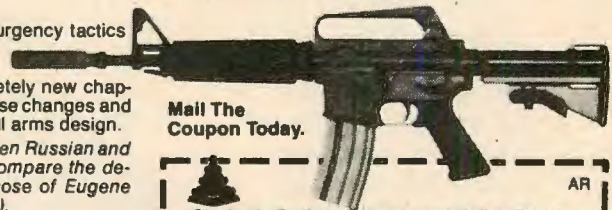
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occasions recently announced that the population of Cambodia is now a little under five million people. This leaves us with the fantastic figure of 2½ million Cambodians dead in the past three years! One third of the population of a gentle people has been destroyed by Communist tyrants! This is, proportionately speaking, one of the worst cases of genocide in history!

Much of the blame for what happened in 1975 lies with an American Congress which, in December, 1975, voted to accept the infamous Conte (R-Mass) Amendment, limiting aid to Cambodia and South Vietnam. The Amendment was co-sponsored by Congressmen Aspin (D-Wisc) and Seiberling (D-Ohio), and specifically cut out half the military aid available to both countries, listed before the cut as the absolute minimum needed to simply replace ammunition for a defensive posture by both countries' armies.

Once the cuts were made, the Communist armies of North Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge began making plans for their final attacks, knowing that the defenders would soon be out of ammunition. Congress had voted for the proposal to limit ammunition sales to the two countries, knowing that confirmed reports indicated the Khmer Rouge at that time was systematically executing all members of the middle class in areas they already occupied.

Events followed their predictable pattern: the South Vietnamese and Cambodian armies cut back ammunition by half to all units, many aircraft were grounded, and morale plummeted as the troops down to the lowest level realized they did not have enough to stop their opponents. South Vietnam began to fall, as did Cambodia and Laos, like dominoes. Still, in March 1975, when the Ford Administration attempted to push through emergency aid, the House Democratic Caucus met in secret on March 13 and voted not to allow the bill on the floor for a vote, thus condemning any last-ditch efforts on behalf of the Cambodian people. Testimony was provided by such guests as Tom Hayden (husband of Jane Fonda), who testified of his close personal contacts with Khmer Rouge leaders and of their sincerity in not executing their opponents, other than "seven leaders" of the Lon Nol government in Cambodia. It was ironic that House Democrats voted in secret (the list of who voted for and against the President's bill was never released) when many of them were elected during the Watergate era with promises to conduct government business in the open.

We at SOF have long been talking about the mass murders the "humanitarian" communist governments of Cambodia and Vietnam have been involved in, but our Congress, perhaps out of its own guilt about the matter, has ignored the

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subject. Now, as a public service, SOF is providing the names of those Congressmen still in office (many lost the last elections or chose not to run) who voted for the cuts in aid to both countries, condemning them—in particular, 2½ million Cambodians—to living hell and ultimately, to death. The world in general is doing nothing to stop these killings (as in the Holocaust, where six million Jews and others were systematically executed without a murmur from the rest of the world), but you the voter may be able to do something with your vote this fall.

The U.S. government condemns our friends for comparatively small violations of human rights, but disregards mass murder in communist countries with an official policy that defies human logic (and compassion).

You, the reader, can do something for 2½ million dead Cambodians and their surviving citizens. Most of the people listed below will run for office again in the U.S. Congress. If one is in your district, remember that he or she made a mistake (we are being optimistic about their intentions) that cost 2½ million lives.

Addabbo, D-NY	Lent, R-NY
Alexander, D-AR	Long, D-LA
Anderson, R-IL	Long, D-MD
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Ashley, D-OH	McDade, R-PA
Aspin, D-WI	McKay, D-UT
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Biaggi, D-NY	Madigan, R-IL
Bingham, D-NY	Metcalf, D-IL
Boggs, D-LA	Michel, R-IL
Boland, D-MA	Minish, D-NJ
Bolling, D-MO	Mitchell, D-MD
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Burke, D-MA	O'Neill, D-MA
Burton, J. D., D-CA	Patten, D-NJ
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Chisholm, D-NY	Price, D-IL
Clay, D-MO	Railsback, R-IL
Cohen, R-ME	Rangel, D-NY
Collins, D-IL	Regula, R-OH
Conable, R-NY	Reuss, D-WI
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Cotter, D-CT	Rodino, D-NJ
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Diggs, D-MI	Roybal, D-CA
Dingell, D-MI	Ryan, D-CA
Drinan, D-MA	Sarasin, R-CT
Eckhardt, D-TX	Schroeder, D-CO
Edwards, D-CA	Seiberling, D-OH
Eilberg, D-PA	Smith, D-IA
Erlenborn, R-IL	Stanton, J. W., R-OH
Fascell, D-FL	Stark, D-CA
Findley, R-IL	Steiger, R-WI
Fish, R-NY	Stokes, D-OH
Flood, D-PA	Stratton, D-NY
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Gilman, R-NY	Vanik, D-OH
Gonzalez, D-TX	Wilson, D-TX
Guyer, R-OH	Winn, R-KS
Hamilton, D-IN	Wolff, D-NY
Hanley, D-NY	Wright, D-TX
Heckler, R-MA	Wylder, R-NY
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# FULL AUTO

BY CHUCK TAYLOR



During the Vietnam war years, it became graphically evident that the modern soldier, regardless of nationality, was seriously deficient where automatic rifle marksmanship was concerned. Although the U.S. Army trooper, for example, was amply trained at Basic Combat Training (BCT) in the principles of normal semi-automatic rifle marksmanship, he received little or no further instruction unless he became a squad automatic-rifleman by MOS (military occupational specialty), in which case he received

advanced, detailed instruction on the use of the auto-rifle in Advanced Individual Training (AIT). This is all fine and good, except for the fact that each man in the U.S. Army who carries a rifle now carries the M-16A1, which, as most of us know, **possesses automatic fire capability by merely turning the selector switch to "auto!"**

As a result, we have a situation that entails everyone carrying an auto-rifle, while only those who are MOS-designated as automatic riflemen are given the

training to allow them the efficient use of the weapon in the full-auto mode. It doesn't take a genius to figure out what happens the instant the first enemy round cracks over the heads of the troops in question. In the initial confusion, fear, and chaos of a hostile encounter, a frightening percentage of troops invariably flip the selector switch of their M16, FAL, G3 or AK to the auto-mode and begin wasting precious ammunition by "spraying" the countryside with

**Bipod-supported Prone Position:** Firer stands facing target with feet placed comfortable distance apart, leading foot slightly forward.

He then drops to his knees with left hand positioned under front handguard of weapon.

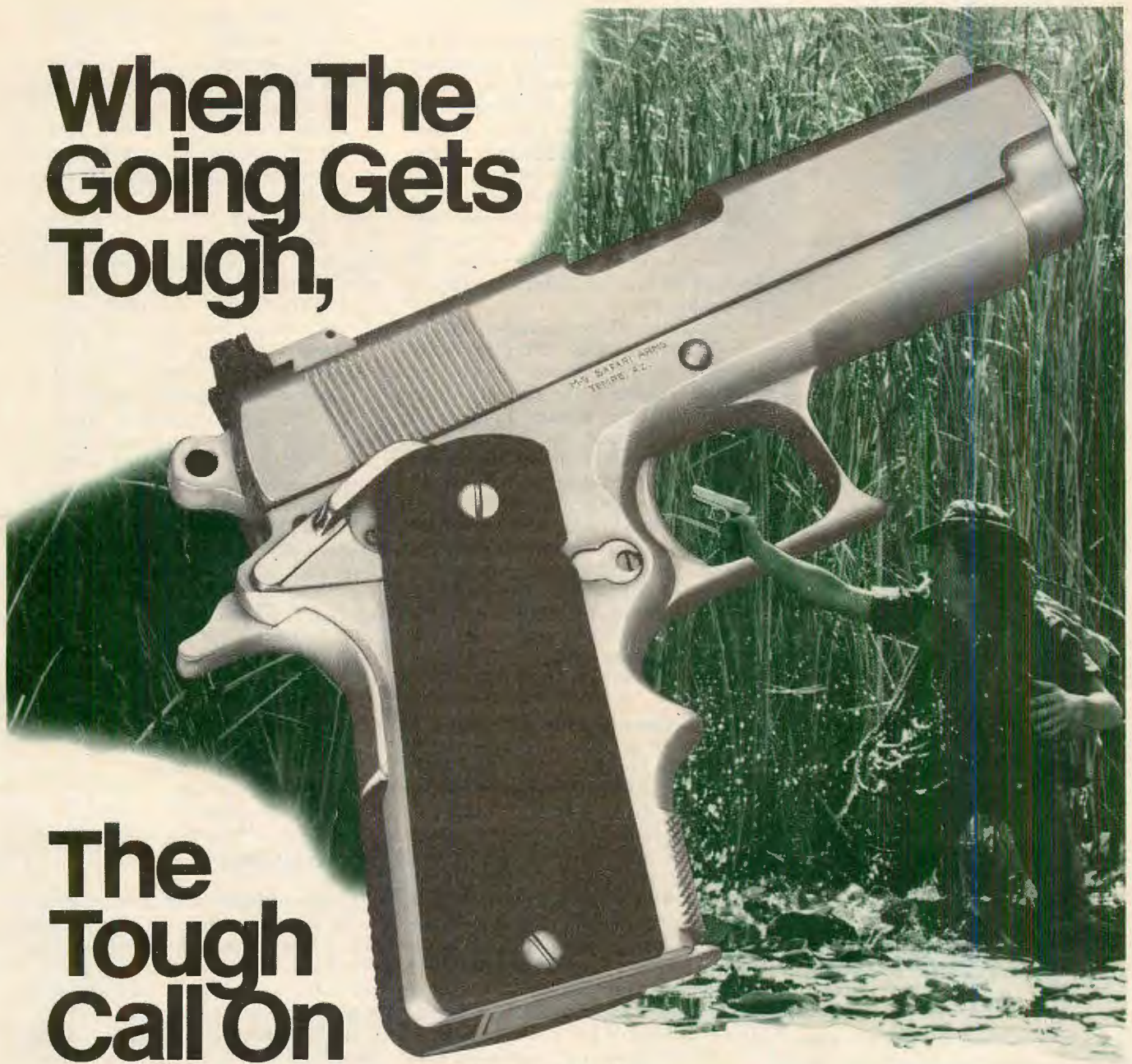
After placing right hand on small of weapon's stock, firer breaks his fall by placing butt of rifle to his front on line between his right knee and target.



Using butt of weapon as pivot, firer rolls on his left side, breaking his fall further with his left forearm.

Firer places butt of rifle into pocket of his shoulder, takes proper grip on trigger group of weapon and handguard. At the same time he positions his feet proper distance apart, body kept in line with axis of bore of weapon. Note position of right elbow.

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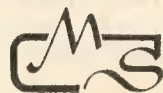
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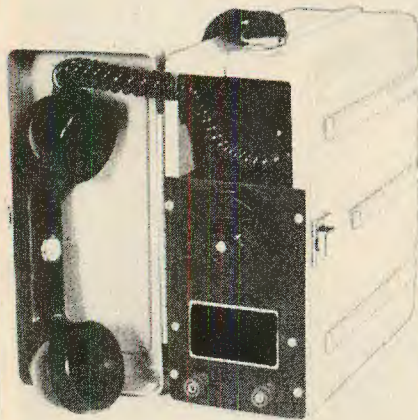


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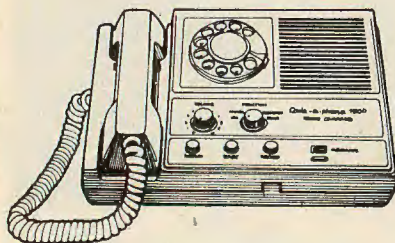
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automatic fire while inflicting little or no damage to the enemy!

I experienced the problem, and it is a very serious one, firsthand as an Infantry platoon leader in Vietnam. I was able to cure the situation only by making it an Article 15 offense in my unit for an non-automatic rifleman by MOS to be caught firing his weapon in the full-auto mode, unless specifically directed to do so by leadership personnel. This, coupled with some intensive discussion and training sessions between field operations, alleviated the problem, at least to a degree I could live with.

During the above-mentioned discussion/training sessions, it became vividly clear to me that the reason the problem existed in the first place was quite simple: the average trooper just doesn't understand the principles of auto-rifle marksmanship or the purpose of providing the soldier with automatic fire capability. Understandably, the type of situation that I related above is caused by equipping everyone with an automatic rifle and then training only two men in each squad (the auto-riflemen by MOS) in the proper use of that rifle. Naturally, it can be most embarrassing at best, downright fatal at worst, and is a situation that needs to be rectified ASAP!

How we came to be in this position is unknown to me, since the engineering genius of Armalite, Colt Industries, Heckler & Koch, and Fabrique Nationale etc. must easily be capable of creating an economical, effective device to preclude the use of fully automatic fire by unauthorized personnel. An example of such a device would be the U.S. M14 rifle, which featured a plug in the place where the full-auto selector should be installed, for use by regular riflemen, with the full-auto capability available only to the designated squad automatic riflemen. This is as it should be for maximum use of effective firepower and ammunition conservation.

Basically, efficient use of the automatic rifle can be categorized into principles. The U.S. Army, in FM 23-9, classified these quite well as: a.) **aiming**, b.) **steady hold**, and c.) **steady hold factors**. Let's examine these factors in detail for clarification. As quoted from the manual itself:

*AIMING—The technique of aiming the [auto] weapon is the same as in semi-automatic rifle marksmanship. The soldier still applies the principles of sight alignment and proper placement of the aiming point.*

Simple, right? Sure it is, but how many times have you heard stories from various people (experts?) on how different the sight picture should be when firing an automatic weapon? Hmmm. . .

*STEADY HOLD—The steady hold factors for firing the [auto] rifle are slightly different from firing the*

*weapon in the semi-automatic mode. The reason for this difference is two-fold:*

1. *The automatic rifle fired from the bipod is more stable due to the bipod.*
2. *The recoil of each round in a burst of automatic fire causes a displacement of sight alignment on the target.*

Also simple. But how many times have you seen these very basic premises flagrantly violated by those who should surely know better?

*STEADY HOLD FACTORS—The eight steady hold factors as listed relate primarily to the use of the [auto] weapon from the bipod-supported prone position and bipod-supported foxhole position. Steady hold as it relates to other firing positions will be discussed during the various firing positions.*

The steady hold factors, although slightly different from position to position, still critically affect the proficiency of the firer from each of those positions; therefore, the basic U.S. Army definition still applies. To continue:

1. *Grip of the left hand.*
2. *Rifle butt in the pocket of the shoulder.*
3. *Right elbow.*
4. *Stock weld.*
5. *Breathing.*
6. *Grip of the right hand.*
7. *Muscular tension.*
8. *Trigger control.*

Let's take a closer look at each of these factors individually:

**1. Grip of the left hand:** four-five inches to the rear of the front sling swivel. The firer's arm should be as straight as possible and, ideally, not contact the ground. Always exert constant, firm, downward, rearward pressure.

**2. Rifle butt in the pocket of the shoulder:** The butt must be placed *firmly* in the pocket of the shoulder. Proper placement reduces recoil and assists in steadying the weapon. In addition, it helps to prevent the butt of the rifle from slipping during firing.

**3. Right elbow:** Varies substantially in each firing position, but generally is important because it provides **balance** to the firer's position, whatever it may be.

**4. Stock weld:** Has two functions. First, by placing the cheek on the same spot on the rifle stock each time the weapon is fired, the firer maintains consistent, correct eye relationship with the sights, and second, when the firer's cheek is placed firmly on the stock, the weapon and the firer's head recoil together, thereby reducing recovery time between bursts.

**5. Breathing:** The firer inhales, then exhales normally, stopping at the instant of normal respiratory pause. The body muscles are relaxed at this point, thereby avoiding strain on the diaphragm and



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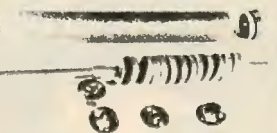
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resultant metabolic movement which affects sight alignment and sight picture.

**6. Grip of the right hand:** the pistol grip or small of the weapon's stock should rest in the "V" formed by the thumb and forefinger. **The trigger finger should not touch the side of the weapon's receiver.** The remaining fingers should be wrapped around the pistol grip/small of the stock and firm, rearward pressure should be exerted by the right hand to keep the buttstock in its proper place on the firer's shoulder.

**7. Muscular tension:** More muscular tension is exerted during firing a weapon in the automatic mode than in the semi-automatic mode, for reasons of control. The firer should exert a firm, downward, rearward pressure.

**8. Trigger control:** Press the trigger straight to the rear and quickly release it, for optimum burst control and ammo economy (three-five bursts) **Do not squeeze it as with classic rifle marksmanship procedures.**

All of these items, discussed and considered on an individual basis, seem deceptively easy. Well, if you think so, grab your M16, bipod, and either find yourself a hole somewhere, or, lacking that, hit the ground and try it! Chances are that you'll find that **your classic semi-automatic training will prevail!** This is why it took over 50,000 rounds of

small arms ammunition to kill one VC/NVA soldier in Vietnam! Case/point?

Although the specific techniques of each country's army do differ to some degree, I've found that, generally, they are quite similar in basic philosophy and intent. Naturally, having been trained by the U.S. Army Infantry School at Ft. Benning, Georgia, I tend to feel that their technique and principles are the best, but, in all honesty, everyone's army *knows* how to shoot auto-weapons . . . the basic problem, again, is that they issue *everyone* an auto-rifle and bother to teach only a *few* how to properly use it!

There are five basic firing positions that have been established by the military entities of the world to facilitate effective use of the automatic rifle. The first of these, the **Prone-Bipod-Supported**, is probably the most solid of all battlefield positions. To assume this position, the firer stands facing his target with his feet placed a comfortable distance apart. He then drops to his knees with his left hand positioned under the front handguard/grip of his weapon and his right hand positioned on the small of the stock. As he then falls forward and breaks his fall by placing the butt of the weapon well to his front on an imaginary line between the target and his right knee. Then, using

the butt of the weapon as a pivot point, he rolls down onto his left side, breaking his fall with the left forearm. At this point, he places the butt of the rifle into the pocket of his shoulder and takes a proper grip on the pistol grip/small of the stock with his right hand, lowering the right elbow to the ground. He then takes the proper grip on the handguard of his weapon with his left hand and, at the same time, spreads his feet a comfortable distance apart while maintaining alignment with the axis of the bore of his weapon. Last, he obtains a stock weld and opens fire.

The second basic position is the **Bipod-Supported Foxhole Position**. Obviously, since this particular position requires the construction of a foxhole and/or sandbags, it is for sustained defensive use. To assume the position, assuming that the firer is already in the foxhole, the firer first adds or removes dirt from the floor of hole to adjust it to his particular height. He then grasps his weapon, with bipod attached, and places his chest against the forward wall of the foxhole, keeping his weapon elevated and pointed down-range. He then positions his rifle and bipod far enough forward to allow continued contact of his chest with the foxhole wall. Last, he grips his weapon in the same way as in the bipod-supported prone position.

—To be continued in the next issue of SOF.



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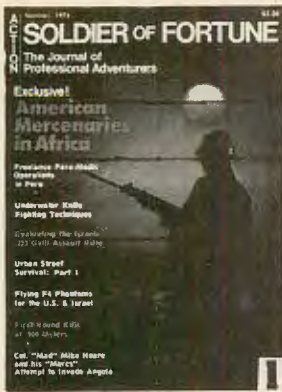


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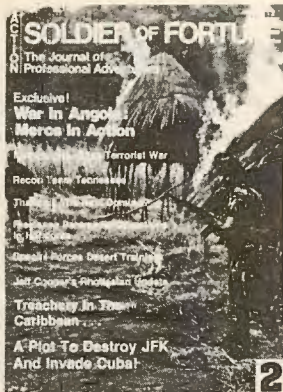
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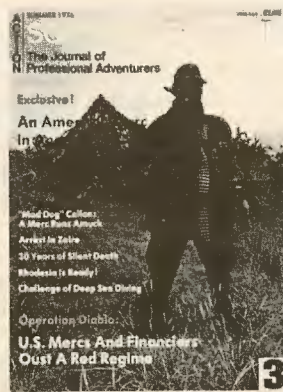
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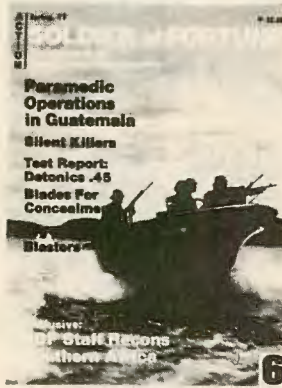
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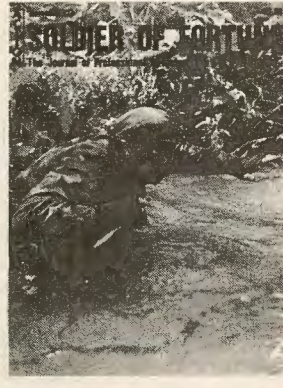
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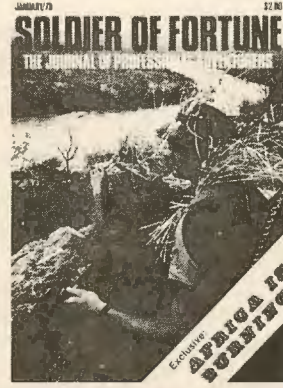
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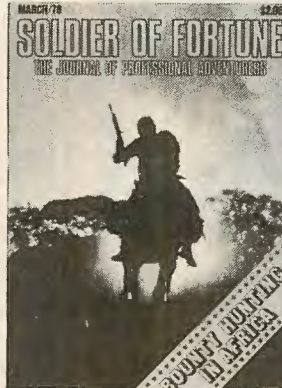
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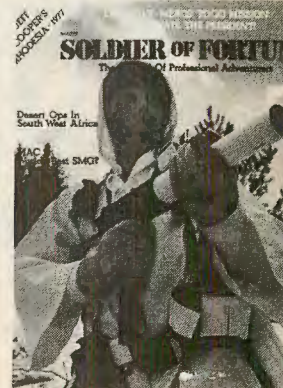
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# TERRAINE & SITUATION-NO. 10

BY JERRY AHERN

Charter Arms obviously made a marketing coup when they picked up the Armalite AR-7 Survival Rifle. They did nothing to it but change the color of the cyclac stock from marbled brown to black and renamed it the Charter Arms AR-7.

The aggressive marketing program they conduct for the rifle has made it a popular commodity in gun and sporting goods stores everywhere. One of my readers, after seeing a previous installment of this column in which I extolled the virtues of this dismantlable .22LR survival rifle, sent in a query regarding a possible scope mount for the little gun.

This request is nothing new. With the gun as excellent and practical as it is, the addition of a scope was a logical choice. Apparently, Charter Arms thought this a worthwhile idea as well.

The B-Square people, makers of the AR-15 scope mount, which requires no drilling or tapping, came up with a similarly painless mount for the AR-7. It was well received when initially marketed by B-Square some months ago. It was so well received that Charter Arms decided to market the little device exclusively. The mount simply clamps on and accepts standard rings and can be used with any appropriate .22LR scope, such as those from Weaver and other makers. Cost of the scope mount is \$9.90 from Charter, at 430 Sniffens Lane, Stratford, CT 06497, USA.

As if this good idea weren't enough, Charter also came out with still another useful accessory for the AR-7. It is nothing complicated, nor even mechanical, but something worth considering. It is a butterfly pistol rug of large proportions, designed to accommodate the disassembled AR-7 securely. With quality zipper and padding, it provides a good degree of protection from the elements. However, with the largely aluminum and cyclac construction of the gun, protection from moisture is hardly important.

What is important is the protection from physical damage the case provides.

The AR-7 by its very nature winds up misused. It is designed with abusive treatment in mind. Field use will do this number quite well and there is no sense in rushing matters when the gun is in storage.

It is precisely where and how the gun will be stored that makes the little case so useful. Most AR-7s are stowed in automobile trunks, the back of a camper, in a boat, under the seat in an airplane, etc. Because of this, unnecessary dust

and dirt can get at the weapon. Also, bangs and bumps are par for the course. Since there is no reason to deliberately abuse any weapon, no matter how ruggedly built it is, the case can be a real gun-saver.

Cost of the case is \$15.00. For more information contact Charter Arms or check out your local dealer. For the person who views the AR-7 as the serious survival weapon it is, both accessories, coupled with a good scope to go with the now available mounts, make an investment that shouldn't be passed up. While you are at it, pick up some extra magazines. I have three spares available and these can easily be sandwiched in with the AR-7 in the new case. When the gun is in use, they can be pocket carried or even taped onto the stock.

\*\*\*\*\*

The police pump shotgun or riot shotgun is generally conceded to be the most effective anti-personnel weapon around under certain circumstances. Loaded to the gills with double ought Buck, the approximately .33 caliber pellets in multiple doses can do a great deal towards disrupting evil intentions.

Of the 12-gauge police pumps, the generally acknowledged leader among the true cogniscenti has always been the Remington 870 R, the plain-Jane version of the famous 870 Wingmaster sporting shotgun. Nothing has happened to change the Remington's claim to excellence, but a new challenger in the police pump field comes so close to matching it that it is worth virtually equal consideration. And the price is substantially lower.

The new gun is the Mossberg 500 ATPS 8. Standard equipment with the gun is a well-executed wood buttstock and fore-end, seven-round extension magazine, and easy-to-pick-up rifled sights on a 20-inch barrel. The gun is also available with a bayonet lug and accepts the M-7 bayonet.

The Mossberg is so good because it shares a number of quality features with the Remington 870. It has the trustworthy double action or slide bars which prevent binding during rapid working of the slide or pump. It features bottom loading and side ejection, the most comfortable way to go when a shotgun is being used for police or martial purposes.

Also, the safety features for proper loading and unloading of the pump are set up perfectly, as they are in the Remington. In other words, the gun can be loaded with an empty chamber and no

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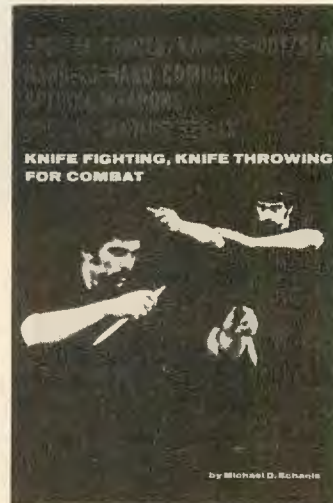
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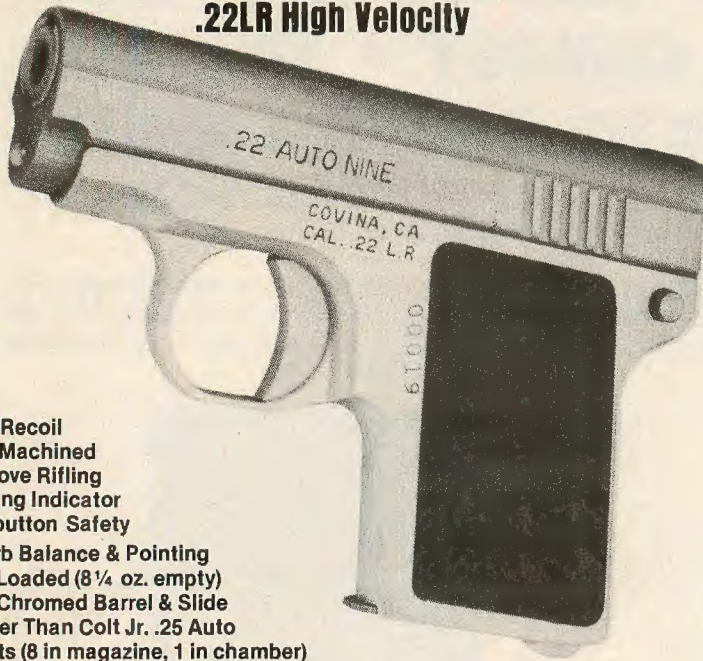
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safety necessary until the pump is worked. With proper training, the chamber can be unloaded without the magazine being emptied, again like the Remington.

The Remington features double cartridge retainers at the mouth of the magazine tube. This is a fine idea and makes for extremely positive feeding. The Mossberg has only one such retainer. Yet, under all but the most bizarre malfunctioning conditions, the single cartridge retainer is more than adequate.

The most important virtue of the Mossberg 500 ATPS 8, aside from its quality of construction, is that it is available standard with extension magazine and rifle sights, many times only available as options on the Remington.

Either gun is an excellent choice in a police pump shotgun. The point is that now there are two pumps of nearly equal quality which offer all the positive features most needed in a pump for this intended use. Other pumps are excellent for sporting purposes, but with the demands of police work these two are the top choices. And the newcomer Mossberg with lower price and built-in quality is a superlative deal.

Cost of the Mossberg 500 ATPS 8 is \$149.97. For more information on the Mossberg police pump, write O.F. Mossberg, Dept. SF, 7 Grasso Ave., North Haven, CT 06473, USA.

\*\*\*\*\*

David Taylor, a long standing reader of this column, recently sent me a truly useful gadget. It's called the Little Concept Flashlight. It weighs less than one ounce, features a sturdy pocket clip, has a tough plastic shell and is about the size of a ballpoint pen. And, the light is disposable.

Philosophically, the concept of disposable this and that doesn't quite sit right with me. But the fact remains that pocket size flashlights are prone to breakdown just when they are needed. Many times it's hard to find a small enough replacement bulb.

The Concept light is priced ridiculously low. When the battery depletes or if a malfunction should occur, just throw it away and buy a new one. And ever since Dave sent me the light I've been using it. No malfunctions at all. My little boy Jason sometimes plays with it. He keeps working the light by depressing the pocket clip/switch. It has been dropped several times. Yet it keeps working.

The Little Concept Flashlight is reliable. David Taylor reports using his under a variety of conditions with excellent results. For the low price and the convenience, this new pocket flash is one of the best accessory buys around. Check local stores or write Concept, Inc., Consumer Products Division, 12707 U.S. 19 South, Clearwater, Florida 33516, USA.



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**DEALER INQUIRIES WELCOMED**

# COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT: Jeff Cooper & Ken Hackathorn

*SOF is pleased to announce its new COMBAT PISTOLCRAFT column will be written, in a question-and-answer format, by LTC Jeff Cooper. Also included will be articles by other professionals, dealing with specific techniques, weapons, and equipment evaluations, plus timely discussions of mental conditioning, attitudes, and concepts that are equally important as technique, yet almost never mentioned in most articles.*

*The approach will always be practical, realistic, logical, and useful. Academics have no place in this life-and-death field. All information disseminated here is of genuine combat value, and the competitor, plinker, and target shooter will not find his subject covered here for its own sake. The true objective of combat competition is a means rather than an end in itself. The end is to survive in a gunfight.*

*Letters from our readers are welcomed. If you have a good question or contribution, send it in to Jeff Cooper, care of Soldier of Fortune Magazine, P.O. Box 693, Boulder, CO 80306.*

Back in the Bronze Age, when the subject of a monthly question-and-answer feature first came up, I was told by the editor with whom I was then associated that I would rue the day.

"Once we start that sort of thing there will be no end to it. You'll spend every

night in the week telling guys things they can read in the ads. You'll be drowned in nonsense. And, what's more, it'll be the same nonsense—year after year after year!"

"On the other hand, isn't it better to tell people what you know they want to know than just to guess? Might work up a lot of good controversy that way."

"Might spend the rest of your life beating dead horses, too. Like 'If the auto is better, why do the cops all use wheelies?'"

"Perish forbid!"

"That's what you'll get. Mark my words! You'll rue the day."

Well, we went back and forth. We finally did set up the column, and, exactly as foretold, I came to rue the day. Not that I mind answering questions, but the Who-is-buried-in-Grant's-Tomb variety does eventually become a weariness. However, the good ones are interesting enough to make up for it, so here we go again.

What are some good ones? Consider:

(a) How do I convince a customer that what he really wants is a shotgun instead of a pistol?

(b) If placement is all and power is irrelevant, why don't we all just go to .22s?

(c) Why do you insist that I must resist violence when everybody else insists that I must not?

These are not bad. These we can address with interest. The task is to devise a way to sift wheat from chaff. (Dear Abby has a staff to do this. I must use a cheaper method.)

So here is a system. Let's try it and see if it works. The following are prefabricated answers to most of what comes in. After thinking up your question, go down the list and see which response best fits your problem. just think—you may save yourself 15 cents and a lot of waiting around.

(See Cooper's 30 Shooting Answers in the box at the bottom of the page.)

*Our first guest columnist is Ken Hackathorn, one of the top-ranked combat pistol shooters in the world. Hackathorn, a member of the five-man U.S. team at the 1977 South African combat pistol matches, won first place honors at the Ft. Harmon Combat Pistol League (1975-76) and the Columbia IPSC Conference (1976) and has been Mid-West Sectional Champion (1976). His training includes the Smith & Wesson armorer school and Jeff Cooper's basic and advanced courses. In the Army, he taught light weaponry as a specialist-*

## 30 INSTANT SHOOTING ANSWERS (Check as applicable)

- 1. Yes.
- 2. No.
- 3. I honestly don't know, nor have I any way of finding out.
- 4. Use it for a sinker.
- 5. You usually get what you pay for.
- 6. A collector's item is worth whatever a specific collector will pay for it.
- 7. Good sights—not necessarily adjustable—and a good trigger.
- 8. Because that's what they have always done, and thinking can cause a lot of trouble.
- 9. Chapter 12 of Hatcher's *Textbook of Pistols and Revolvers*.
- 10. It probably won't break, but it will wear out sooner.
- 11. 7.2 of Unique.
- 12. Refer to:
  - a. Charley Askins
  - b. Massad Ayoob

- c. Dustin Hoffman
- d. *Secrets of Modern Knife Fighting*
- e. *Cooper on Handguns*
- f. Andrew Young and / or Idi Amin Dada
- g. The U.S. Constitution, as originally written
- 13. The major-caliber heavy-duty auto pistol.
- 14. It'll never get off the ground.
- 15. That's exactly the sort of question I would ask if I wanted to get me in Dutch with Big Brother.
- 16. It tickles.
- 17. Do unto others as they would do unto you, but first.
- 18. The concept of "double-action" in auto pistols has been weighed and found wanting.
- 19. "De-horn" all exposed corners.
- 20. I cannot tell you which holster is best suited to your needs without an extensive personal interview.

- 21. Your question is insufficiently
  - a. Specific
  - b. Clear
  - c. Witty
  - d. Interesting
  - e. Legible
- 22. Supply sharp, detailed, large-scale photos.
- 23. It was designed by a committee.
- 24. Start out with 30 years' experience and marry money.
- 25. You'll do all right. Most everybody does, and the others have no further problems.
- 26. Watch his hands, and then concentrate on your front sight.
- 27. Draw quickly—shoot carefully.
- 28. The minor calibers do not suffice.
- 29. The verification of any theory lies in its observed correlation with reality. (Something about a pudding?)
- 30. Try it. You'll like it!

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*instructor for the Special Forces. A part-time deputy sheriff, Hackathorn also teaches police firearms courses. His article covers ammunition, concealed carry, and holster design.*

#### Ammunition:

A high percentage of problems that plague shooters in combat shooting circles can be directly related to poor quality reloaded ammunition. Autoloading pistols are very particular about the ammunition that is to be used in them. Rounds must be sized properly and correct bullet design is most important.

A word of warning: stay away from short nose bullets such as the 185 grain SWC design for target shooting.

One cast bullet that has stood the test of time is the Lyman 225 grain RN no. 452374, .45 acp. With it you will have a hard time going wrong. The other favorite is the Hensley & Gibbs no. 68 long nose 200 grain SWC. This is the bullet that is the choice of champions and is my favorite.

Recently I have been testing a new RCBS double cavity mould that copies the H&G no. 68 design. RCBS no. 82047 is a 201 grain Keith bullet that feeds very well, shoots accurately, and stabilizes for long range shooting. Cast these bullets fairly hard and with 1/32 inch of the shoulder seated out of the case mouth; it will feed smoothly and positively.

A key point to high quality reloads is the use of a taper crimp die in your reloading process. Trying to get by without one is foolish when the success of your shooting can be added with just one more stage in the reloading cycle.

The best way to check your ammo for functioning is to strip your pistol and use the barrel chamber as a go-no-go gauge. Drop the loaded rounds into the chamber. If they don't seat easily and level with the barrel hood, then changes must be made. Tip the barrel over and see that the loaded rounds drop free of their own weight. If not, you'll be lucky if those rounds will get you through a shooting situation. Smart soldiers, laymen, and professional gun handlers check all their ammo (factory rounds included) before going into a fight. Plenty of people have found that factory ammo can be bad also.

Revolver men should make sure that loaded rounds will drop freely into cylinder chambers and out again. This should be done with speed loaders in particular. Close the cylinder and carefully rotate the cylinder to check for high primers. Any suspect cartridge should be set aside for practice sessions.

#### Practical Carry:

Those that pack a serious sidearm for defensive purposes often find concealment to be a prime factor. I'm often asked how a person of smaller stature can comfortably conceal a large frame pistol like the .45 auto or P-35 9mm. The answer

is first the manner in which you dress. Current fashions aren't designed for gun carry. As long as the queers in the garment business design and sell clothing styles that turn them on, the rest of the male populace will just have to adjust.

Stay away from form fitting clothes (they will restrict you in all types of fighting). Use shirts or jackets that don't give away the bulk that a large pistol may make. For hot summer evenings a light nylon windbreaker can be used for casual wear. If you ever get into a fight, you'll need a lot of gun, not a little one. If trouble strikes, make sure your piece will do the job.

The proven holster for these occasions is the inside-the-pants variation. Unfortunately, the over-the-counter variety is usually a real disaster. For years I have used a superb example that is made and sold by Milt Sparks, Box 7, Idaho City, Idaho 83631. This fine design is called the Summer Special. Bruce Nelson, the man that came up with this design, wanted a concealable holster for his .45 that was secure, fast, and that would allow reholstering without the need to use both hands.

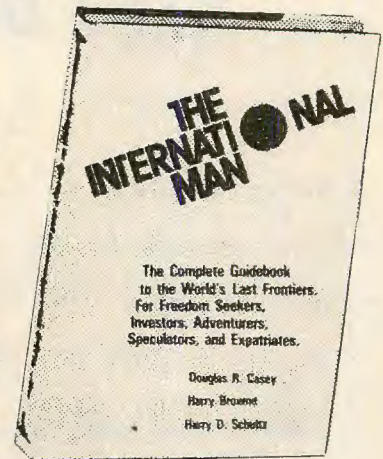
Alessi Custom Concealment Holsters, 2465 Niagara Falls Blvd., Tonawanda, N.Y. 14150 also makes a fine inside-the-pants holster, which is one of the most comfortable to wear on the market. It relies on the custom-moulded shaping of the holster to retain the pistol secure and ready for a fast draw. It is very efficient for revolvers since the position of the cylinder is slightly above the belt and this aids in reducing the discomfort that comes with trying to hide a wheel-gun. Lou Alessi also offers a nice line of shoulder holsters for those who prefer the under-arm carry.

People ask me, "what kind of ammo do I use in a given caliber for self-defense purposes?" Often those asking the question are not interested in the field of weaponcraft; they merely want an over-the-counter pistol cartridge that will save their bacon in a fight. This type of inquiry is common with police officers, who, even after a decade of great advancement in ammunition design, have little knowledge of the choices that the ammunition companies now offer.

In each of the serious calibers I have settled on one round that is tops for the purpose at hand. The .35 calibers have the widest choice, yet the key to success lies in one particular version per round. The 9mm Luger is best settled with the choice of Remington 115 grain JHP (R9mm1). It feeds and functions in all variations of 9mm autos. The .38 special round of choice is Winchester-Western .38 spec. (MS) 158 grain SWC hollow point that is a PP round. It will shoot close to point of aim in fixed sighted guns and performs well in all barrel lengths. .357 Mag. users would be wise to choose

Continued on page 90

# Where Are the World's Last Frontiers of Freedom and Financial Opportunity?



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# The ST-23 Fighting Knife

by Jim Phillips

In Fredrick, Maryland, is the shop of the man whom many consider to be the finest knife craftsman in the world. This man, William F. Moran, Jr., has been making his own knives since World War II.

Moran makes a fighting knife which he calls the ST-23. This knife is based more on his own design than any other of the knives he makes. While designing this fighting knife, he kept several points in mind.

The Vietnam era concept of a fighting knife was along the lines of a stiletto such as the Fairbairn/Sykes, Case V-42, and the Gerber. These knives were designed for sneaking up on the enemy and sticking him in a vital spot. They were designed for one specific purpose of knife work not for actual knife fighting.

However, going back to World War II and Korea, the enemy was often confronted head on. He was sometimes armed with a knife himself. This was very true in the South Pacific. So, combatants would actually be engaged in knife fighting. The idea wasn't just to stick somebody, it was to cut and slash. Once the man was cut and bleeding badly, he would also be upset psychologically and lose his mental fighting attitude.

A large, wicked-looking knife gives the fighter a good psychological advantage over his opponent. It is very hard to get this advantage with the smaller stiletto-style daggers and boot knives in favor today. Most of the current fighting knives in use today are actually small hunting knives with a clip or spear-point blade.

Moran agrees with the Special Forces concept that each piece of equipment used should have more than one purpose. The ST-23 Fighting Knife is designed to be a survival knife as well as a fighting knife. It is large enough and heavy enough to be useful both in camp and the jungle. Often times, prior customers told Moran, the knives soldiers carried were useless for anything besides sticking in somebody and were often not too good for that.

William Moran is a knifemaker who firmly believes in research of not only the steel and manufacturing processes, but also the history and theory of knife makers. Great knife makers, such as the Persians, made knives based on the cut-and-slash principle in their blade design. The saber was curved because it was a slashing weapon. The cut was considered more important in combat than the thrust. For this reason, Persian-designed



blades were curved. Their knives also had this curve in them, because the Persians were interested in the cut-and-slash principle.

The blade of the ST-23 is eight inches long and  $1\frac{1}{8}$  inches wide. Its blade design is based on older theories of knife fighting, with some throwback to Persian design included. Moran feels this style blade is very important for today's modern combat concepts. Because his blade design is based upon an era when there was more knife combat, Moran's ST-23 overcomes three major problems found in other combat-knife blade designs of today.

One problem that Moran kept hearing of was that these stiletto blades broke! Many times he had read and been told of men who had plunged their knife into the body of an enemy and had the blade snap. This was a serious problem in the Fairbairn/Sykes stiletto. Gerber had to change their early blade design because of a similar problem.

Another problem was that the sharp tip of many blades would actually get stuck in the bones of the body when a thrust was made. The Case Company had to change the design of their blade in their V-42 knife, issued to the First Special Service Force, for this exact reason.

A third problem is that once the blade enters the body, the fighter needs enough mass in the blade to cause severe damage while the blade enters, is inside and is withdrawn. The thrust of a stiletto may miss a vital organ on entry and exit. A blade with enough mass can impart plenty of damage. Even if a vital organ is missed, the opponent will know he has been cut.

The handle of the ST-23 knife has been designed for the knife fighter after numerous conversations with Special Forces, C.I.A., and Marine personnel who had come into Moran's shop to have knives made. Most of these men agreed that a knife fighter holds his knife in a classic fencing grip. Therefore, Moran's fighting knife has a natural forward and upward point, when held in the hand. It has a very natural and comfortable feel when held. The handle has a snakelike design which makes it lie in the hand, a feature which gives the knife user a positive feeling when the weapon is used.

Moran is frankly surprised that more makers don't pay more attention to the handle design of their fighting knives. As you grab the ST-23, it's almost impossible not to get a positive grip on the knife. No matter how you pick up the knife, it's hard to grip it wrong. The maker wanted to eliminate having to shift the knife around in the hand, prior to use. He felt the split second lost in adjusting the grip was dangerous psychologically and might prove fatal!

The pommel or butt of the ST-23 has a semi-knuckle bow design, incorporated into the knife design after several men in Vietnam complained that in the heat of battle, when their hands were sweated or bloody, the knife would slip out of their hands and might get lost in a body. The knuckle bow idea wasn't new. In the 1840s, the Hicks Company in Cleveland, Ohio, used it in the knives they were

making. Knuckle bows were common on Bowies during the Civil War. Knuckle knives became popular again during World War I. Moran didn't like the idea of a bow that went from the pommel to the quillon (butt to hilt). He felt there was too much chance that a full bow would get in the way as the knife was drawn. So, a semi-bow was added to assist in pulling the knife out of the body.

The bow is also pointed for use as a very nasty brass knuckles for close-in fighting. Both the knuckle bow and guard are turned forward, toward the blade. When the knife is carried in the sheath, this design helps prevent the knife from snagging on vines and brush when going through jungles and rough country. When held in the hand, it provides three more points to face the enemy with. Brass is used in the butt and guard because it is strong and looks good, rather than to catch a steel blade with the brass guard.

One knife design which Moran feels has no place as a fighting knife is the Bowie. Most Bowies are too large and clumsy. The blade points are too thick and are in the wrong place for a slash and cut. The whole knife is poorly designed. There is more glamour in the knife than usefulness. One reason for the knife's popularity was that Bowie was an industrialist and a very important man. His fame gave the knife popularity. Although Bowie was only in two or three knife duels before the Alamo, it was as if the president of General Motors had designed and manufactured his own fighting knife.

After the Civil War, knives lost their appeal. They regained popularity with World War I but lost it until World War II began. At this time, a nationwide plea was put out for knives for our fighting men. Moran began making knives around this time. Although when the Korean War started, there were only five or six men making knives in the country, when the Vietnam conflict heated up, there was a tremendous surge in the demand for personnel knives.

Fighting in a tropical area, with emphasis on irregular warfare, brought a new demand for fighting knives. One Marine came to Moran's shop on crutches to thank him for the custom knife that had been made for him. He had been cutting his way through elephant grass when his squad was ambushed. Before he had time to get his rifle in action, he was lying on his back, looking up at a V.C. The Marine took one swipe at the Cong's leg, almost severing it. As he got to his feet, he had just enough time to slice the face of another V.C. who was charging him. Here is a case where a heavy fighting knife came in handy.

On another occasion, this same Marine's position was overrun. Inside the perimeter were several 55-gallon drums that held gasoline. The men wanted to pour out the gas to use against the attackers. The Marine went from drum to



The ST-23 is made with Damascus steel, has leather and silver sheath. Photo by Paul Frye.

drum, hacking them open with his knife. That's strong testimony for the strength of a fighting knife!

Other letters in Moran's files are from "tunnel rats" who carried the ST-23 when they went crawling underground. One of these troopers wrote Moran for another knife because his buddies had liked it so much that one of them had stolen it! Other letters and visits came from men who used their ST-23s to cut their way out of helicopters whose doors had smashed shut on hard landings. One crew chief wrote he had to cut his way out of his crashed copter, then cut back through the skin to retrieve supplies and equipment.

Moran feels that many knife makers don't like to make larger knives because they are more trouble to make. It is far easier to produce a small, light hunting knife variation, than to produce a larger fighting knife.

Moran is so deeply involved in his art that he takes two months of every year off from production. During this time he studies new steels and processes. He takes trips to the mountains and swamps, carrying 15 or 20 knives from all makers

and models. He then uses them in the field, doing camp chores and skinning game. Moran cannot conceive of a maker selling a knife that he doesn't first use himself. He feels that a knife must be a functional weapon or tool first. That is more important than a pretty-looking work of art. A pretty-looking knife that can't stand up in the field is as good as pig iron.

The ST-23 blade is made from high carbon W-2 steel. This steel holds its sharpness and temper, unlike knives made from 440-C stainless, which are a problem in the field, since they do not hold their sharpness and are hard to resharpen. Because most buyers have taken reasonable care of their knives, very few complaints of rusting have come back to Moran.

He used wood in the handles of most of the ST-23s made during the Vietnam years, mostly of curly maple, which has a tough-twist grain that is hard to split. He also used some rosewood, as it holds up very well in tropic climates. A purist, Moran can't see using synthetic materials for his handles.

Moran wonders why the U.S. military issues such poor knives. He recalls seeing many knives with their blades broken off at the hilt. A number of years ago, he was visited by a powerful Washington figure, to whom he related his disgust at the knives being given to soldiers. He offered to design a good fighting knife which could also be used as a survival knife for the military. He gave the design to the man—but never heard from him again. So, Moran continued to make fighting knives for professional soldiers on an individual basis.

Moran feels the current issue knife/bayonet is horrible. Contrary to the government's stand that there was no need for a personnel fighting knife for its men, Moran was swamped with orders for the ST-23 during Vietnam. He feels there is a definite need for commercial knife makers to make mass-produced blades, since they make good products, at a decent cost, which are available. He feels companies such as Gerber are very much into the needs of the modern soldier and also fill the void created by the high demand for custom knives and small numbers of custom knife makers.

Despite the government's anti-fighting-knife stance, Moran still works to fill back orders for his fighting knives. When this country is at war, all his production shifts to the fighting man's needs. Ten years of back orders for a knife that costs over \$300 proves that the professional soldier wants the feeling of a good blade beside him when he goes into battle.





# SOF Fights BATF Gun Registration Effort

On 16 March 1978, Rex Davis, Director of Tobacco and Firearms, announced plans for computerized registration of all firearms transactions from the manufacturer to the wholesaler to the dealer. A special 14 digit serial number would be added to the barrel, at the expense of the manufacturers, identifying the make, caliber, barrel length, and date of manufacture, all to ease computerization by BATF. Lost or stolen firearms were to be reported within 24 hours under the new regulations, designed, said Davis, to help BATF observe "trends" in firearms sales and transactions. The public was required to respond within 60 days to comment on the regulations, which would then go into effect without having to be voted on by Congress. Congress, the legislative branch of government, enacts laws at the request of citizens, while the executive branch, under the President, writes regulations to enforce or interpret the laws. In this case, BATF claimed to use some vaguely worded portions of the '68 Gun Control Act as their authority to enact these new regulations without having to ask Congress for legislation. The National Rifle Association hadn't alerted its members, so little was known about the new regulations until several groups, including the editors of SOF magazine, read about them in *Gun Week*, a trade publication.

Alarmed, the SOF staff obtained copies of the new regulations and studied them carefully. Contrary to BATF's claim of instituting measures to fight gun crime, SOF discovered that the wording of the regulations left no doubt—BATF was beginning a national computer scheme to ultimately register all weapons and their owners, using crime-fighting as an excuse. For those who have been thinking they'll hide their guns and claim them lost or stolen when registration begins, BATF had included a kicker: a five-year sentence and a \$5,000 fine for failing to report a gun theft, with serial numbers, in less than 24 hours. Although the proposed system did not call for registration of individual gun owners yet, it would take only a small step to complete the full circle to total registration, using the new system. Rex Davis himself said as much in a press conference on the new regs, when he bragged that, using the computerized system and the existing Forms 4473 filled out by every gun purchaser since 1968, BATF could get the name and address of any gun owner within 20 minutes.

The editors of *Soldier of Fortune* have taken the stand that gun ownership by the citizens of the U.S. helps preserve democracy. The Founding Fathers understood this, which is why they made it the Second Amendment to the Constitution. All citizens during that period (as in-

dicated in letters written by Jefferson to several governors) were considered members of the militia, hence the phrase about the militia in the Amendment. In the U.S., ultimate law resides in the great mass of citizens, as long as they are armed. A government cannot ignore the demands of its armed citizens if they oppose its decisions.

In addition, SOF feels there is an ultimate right of the individual to protect him/herself—and the gun is the greatest equalizer in our history. There are three parties to every crime: the victim, the criminal, and the police. It takes no expert to guess which one arrives at the crime last. Therefore, SOF feels that every citizen should have the means to defend himself either from his fellow citizen, or from his government.

Upon realizing the intent and implications of the BATF proposals, and aware that the usual pro-gun organizations were not mobilized to fight such a short-notice political maneuver, SOF formed the Ad Hoc Committee Against Gun Registration to alert all SOF subscribers. Other groups formed in other states to do the same, since the NRA hadn't yet notified its members. Subscriber Bruce Schmidt paid the *Minot Daily News* (N. Dakota) to run the mailing in full as a newspaper ad, while the largest Machinists Local in Kentucky (IAMAW Lodge 681) put it in their newsletter, which reached an additional 4,000 subscribers. Duane Merrill, of *Printing by George*, Louisville, Kentucky, reprinted the mailing and sent 1,000 copies to sporting goods stores in the state. The California Libertarian Party passed a resolution endorsing the stand against BATF's proposals. Response was terrific from readers and subscribers.

The mailing warned readers of the impending proposals and urged them to write letters to BATF (in duplicate, as required by law), protesting the regulations. In addition, readers were asked to contact their Senators and Congresspeople to protest the usurpation of Congressional authority, whose intent was demonstrated several times in the past when Congress voted two and three to one to refuse BATF the right to register firearms. Congress was asked to withhold the projected cost of the project, 4.2 million dollars, from BATF's budget, which several subcommittees subsequently did. The letters also asked for the replacement of the Director of the BATF, Rex Davis, and the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury, Richard Davis (no relation), who claimed to have originated the proposals.

Congress voted 314 to 80 to oppose any national registration scheme and the House Subcommittee on Crime called the Davises to appear before it and explain the regulations and their intent. Both

men claimed the regulations were intended to fight crime and would not lead to total registration and ultimate confiscation. Congressman John Ashbrook (R—Ohio) suspected the men were lying and requested they be put under oath. Under oath, the two men at times refused to answer questions concerning the origin and intent of the regulations, and at other times gave statements that contradicted information presented later in the form of memos written to or by both men. Anti-gun advocates testified that the regulations were definitely what they wanted: the first steps for total registration and eventual confiscation of personally owned weapons in the U.S.

Following the testimony, several congressmen announced their intention to investigate charges of perjury against the Davises. Director Rex Davis announced his resignation, effective in 30 days, a few days after the congressional announcements. The hearings did indicate that the regulations originated in the White House, not the BATF, as originally stated, and that they were indeed part of an overall gun control scheme aimed not at criminals, but at the gun owning populace. In actual fact, BATF had included in its regulations a requirement that gun dealers turn over to BATF the names and addresses of gun owners (as recorded on Forms 4473), but had dropped the provision from the published version. Careful reading of the proposals brought to light the fact that gun owners' names would in fact be registered in three different provisions of the regulations, according to *Spotlight* newspaper.

BATF subsequently announced that over 300,000 pieces of mail had been received about the regs and the count was running 15-to-1 against them. Insiders at BATF said the figure was more like 800-to-1 against the regs, but that BATF was using bureaucratic smokescreens to limit the count. BATF also announced that the proposals were "misunderstood" by the public (after the allegedly perjured testimony by Treasury officials, one does not doubt that there was a lot of misinformation going around) and that the proposals would remain alive, with additional days to comment on them. The idea was left in the minds of many that the administration, in spite of the resounding defeat suffered at the hands of Congress and the public outcry from citizens, may go ahead and institute the regulations, warning us all of the need to keep our guns because a "government out of control" may already be a reality.

Thanks to the response from our subscribers, SOF was heavily involved in the fight against gun registration. The expenses of the Ad Hoc Committee came to over \$3,500. Some \$500 in donations were received, with the rest of the costs covered by SOF.



**“More battles are won — and lost — in board rooms than on the battlefields.”**



This is literally true. More battles are, indeed, won and lost in board rooms than on the battlefields. The decisions that should be tactical and practical are, too often, political.

The decisions that a soldier has to live with — and sometimes has to die with — the decisions that affect his life such as how much support will he get, what kind of support will he get, and when will he get it — these decisions are generally made in board rooms miles from the battlefields.

But, what's new? It has always been that way. It probably always will be!

Well, that's not quite true. What's new is that some commanders — and an increasing number of soldiers — have what might seem to be an unfair advantage. They have the survivors edge. They have the Hagoth.

The Hagoth is a simple-to-use voice stress analyzer. It is a very specialized piece of electronics designed for decision makers who can't afford to make mistakes. It is a small, portable battery operated device that detects, instantly, the absence or presence of stress in a persons voice. When there is absolutely no stress present, eight green lights are lit — and you *know* that the speaker is being truthful.

Think about that for a minute! Isn't that generally all that you want to know? Or are you the really curious type who wants to know what it means when the eight red lights are lit up on the face of your Hagoth?

The eight red lights mean that the speaker is experiencing a great deal of stress. He could be sitting on an ant hill, looking at the wrong end of an AR-15 — or lying. All of these things can cause stress. And it is up to you to find out if the speaker is sitting on an ant hill or looking at the wrong end of an automatic weapon. But, when you have eliminated all of the external causes of stress, then you *know* that you are being had. And it is probably none too soon to start digging a

very deep foxhole.

Like we said, the Hagoth can be called the survivors edge.

Which brings us to you. We can't begin to tell you all of the specific uses that you might have for the Hagoth. But we can tell you a little bit about some of our customers. They use it to screen prospective employers. In your line of work that might make a lot of sense. That might keep you from making a very bad mistake!

That might be *your* survivors edge.

But, how about you? Do you have use for a device that lets you instantly get at the truth of the matter — whether you are in a foxhole, sitting at a desk, or talking on the telephone? Do you need the survivors edge? Are you a doer — or a dreamer?

If you are a dreamer, the Hagoth is a fun toy.

But, if you are a doer, if you place a premium on survival, if you depend on making correct decisions, then the Hagoth at \$1500 could well be that cheapest *life* insurance that you will ever buy.

Think about it!

And then drop us a line at Hagoth Corp., Department SF, 85 N.W. Alder, Issaquah, Washington 98027.

Better yet, give us a call at (206) 235-1020. We'll show you how you can't afford not to have a Hagoth!

□□□□□□□□

P.S. The Hagoth comes with a total satisfaction, money-back guarantee. (Just try and get a comparable warranty from Remington or Smith and Wesson.)

And, if we were to ever renege on our guarantee, you can be certain that we wouldn't start with **you!**



## An In-Depth Look at the L.A. SWAT Team

# SWAT In Action

by Norman Sklarewitz

You expect a Marine or Army combat officer to know how to man a command post and command a platoon in combat. And it's the mission of trained assault troops to take out a sniper or attack an enemy strong point.

But these days, the big city cop is also going into combat against the guerrilla and enemy sharpshooter. The phrase, "urban warfare," isn't something just made up by newspaper headline writers; it's a fact of life all over the world. The sharp increase in terrorism in a dozen different forms has brought about the evolution of a new breed of American lawman. He's the counter-insurgency cop—a specially trained, armed and organized lawman like none other in U.S. history.

They operate under a variety of names around the country. It's Special Operations in New York City and the Special Enforcement Detail in another city that doesn't want to be identified. No matter what the name, each in its own way is dedicated to combatting the outlaw who conducts his kidnapping, air piracy and assassinations in the name of political extremism. As far as the lawmen are concerned, however, he's still a criminal, only there's nothing common about him. The politically motivated extremist is often well trained and deadly dangerous.

Some people snicker when a half dozen or so self-styled revolutionaries organize, take on fancy titles like General Field Marshal, and claim to be a "Liberation Army." Spokesmen for liberal groups claim that police are exaggerating the problem and overreacting to radical rhetoric.

Lawmen, however, aren't laughing at such speeches and radical "manifestos." Says one police official, "None of these

groups is a threat in the sense of being able to overthrow the government by violent means. But they are quite capable of committing acts of terrorism, armed robbery, assassination, kidnapping, and aerial hijacking. In that sense, no matter how small a group may be, it is indeed a serious threat."

And to take on such terrorists calls for more than the cop on the beat, armed with a .38 Police Special and a whistle. It takes an elite force within the conventional law enforcement structure, an outfit with definite military capabilities.

Probably the best known of such organizations in the country is found in Los Angeles. It goes by the acronym, SWAT—Special Weapons and Tactics. That doesn't tell you much. It would mean more to call SWAT personnel "combat troops."

In short, SWAT is to the Los Angeles Police Department what the Special Forces and Rangers are to the U.S. Army.

First of all, SWAT members are volunteers who are selected for their records of coolness under stress. They are experienced street cops, but once tapped for SWAT duty, each candidate is given unique training—at least for police.

As every military man knows, training is absolutely essential to effectiveness in the field. SWAT adopts the same attitude. Once a candidate has been accepted for duty with the elite team, he undergoes an intensive five-day course, putting in 10 hours a day.

"Almost all of this is practical drills in SWAT tactics," says Lt. Patrick McKinley, leader of SWAT's six squads. The program of instruction breaks out to 10 hours on the firing range, perhaps eight hours of classroom instruction at the

SWAT team members learn fine points of rappelling in course of being well trained for any contingency.



Police Academy and then all the rest running tactical problems — at the film studio's backlot and at other, usually undisclosed, field training locations.

At some point, too, the candidate has to pass SWAT's own rigid physical qualifications test.

Once assigned to a SWAT unit, each team member must continue to requalify



Above: Some SWAT personnel carry Armalite semi-auto AR 180. Note revolver on pistol belt above gas mask.



SWAT team sergeant with weaponry normally carried by SWAT team. Also note gas mask, body armor, and flak jacket.

with the .45, the M-16 and the long rifle once a month. Generally, a half hour is spent on the range with each weapon.

Physical fitness, too, is a constant concern of SWAT's leader. About 30 minutes a day of push ups and other calisthenics are called for on duty time and generally most members drop by the Academy after work for another hour of conditioning exercises.

In the course of developing techniques that might be utilized in street combat, SWAT emphasizes realism in training exercises whenever possible.

In this they have the advantage of using a Hollywood motion picture studio

"back lot." There, among the full scale movie sets, SWAT men rehearse attacking simulated suspects holed up in a rural farm house or in a city tenement building. SWAT teams also practice moving up under hostile fire from snipers.

SWAT experts analyze and evaluate every guerrilla-warfare or terrorist type incident in the country. For example, after the grisly 1973 New Orleans hotel shoot out in which seven were killed and 21 wounded by a sniper, SWAT went over every aspect of the engagement. In 1976, after Hanafi Muslims had occupied three buildings in Washington, D.C., and held hundreds of people hostage, L.A. police

Below: Fire and movement exercises constitute prominent part of SWAT training. Here, LAPD SWAT members rehearse, using Hollywood movie set.



department officials went to the capitol, debriefing those involved, and came back with a detailed critique of the entire operation.

SWAT terminology is straight out of Fort Benning or Camp Pendleton. Recruits learn to take advantage of cover and concealment when moving up, to provide covering fire to advancing riflemen, and to move silently when on night patrol.

Once trained, each man in SWAT is armed and outfitted to engage in a miniature version of the same kind of street fighting that took place as U.S. infantry pushed across Europe in World War II. This means attacking a fortified enemy strongpoint, taking on a concealed sniper, and breaking through a counter-ambush.

If this doesn't sound like ordinary police work, it isn't. This is urban combat.

In the ranks of SWAT today are decorated Vietnam War veterans, ex-infantrymen, and one vet of the Navy's crack SEAL unit. "In terms of *esprit de corps*, this outfit is a lot like the Green Berets," says one Vietnam vet.

SWAT places heavy emphasis on discipline and teamwork. "An ordinary street policeman is basically an individual who, at the most, works with only one other man, his partner," says a SWAT sergeant. "But in SWAT, we drill teamwork over and over. In a tactical operation, you can have only one man giving orders."

Organization of SWAT is also strictly along military lines. A basic SWAT element consists of five men. Two such units make up a 10-man SWAT squad led by a sergeant. In all, the Los Angeles Police Department has six SWAT squads which constitute a platoon commanded by Lt. Patrick McKinley, 37. His boss is Cpt. Taylor L. Searcy, commander of the crack Metropolitan Division to which SWAT belongs. Searcy is a veteran of the Ko-

rean War where he served as a sergeant with D Co., 2nd Bn, 1st Rgt., 1st Marine Division.

Early in the development of SWAT, it became obvious that the ordinary police uniform wouldn't do. SWAT personnel wear a distinctive two-piece blue field uniform, paratrooper-style boots, and a blue baseball cap or a Navy watch cap, practical headgear when pulling a gas mask on and off.

In 1977 SWAT was mobilized about once every other week, a decline from its average of two call-outs per week in 1975. Going into action that often sharpens team efficiency and employment. But it's the weapons carried by men of a SWAT team that set them apart from any other deputy sheriff or street policeman. L.A.P.D. SWAT team personnel are armed as follows:

- Team Leader: AR-15 .223 cal. rifle.
- Marksman: .308 caliber Ruger Model 77 rifle with Redfield wide field 3.9 variable scope.
- Observer: M-16. He is issued 6-power Bushnell binoculars to help spot the target for the long rifleman.
- Scout: M-16
- Rear Guard: 12-gauge Remington shotgun.

All team members pack Government Model Mark IV Colt .45s as well. For personal protection, SWAT personnel wear lightweight ballistic vests under their uniform shirts and flak vests over them. Each man wears a webbed belt and suspender harness on which he carries a gas mask, magazine pouches, wire cutters, man-hole-cover hook, first-aid pack, two-way radio, canteen, and tear gas shells.

Handy, too, is SWAT's own Command Post and Logistics van, a converted patrol wagon which carries pry bars, a battering ram, ladders, ropes, extra ammo, communication gear, telephones, maps, aerial photos, and the Swiss seats used in rappelling down the sides of

buildings. It rolls on all major incidents to provide backup support.

With that kind of firepower and equipment, you don't have to be a military expert to see there's not much comparison between the lawman with his service revolver, whistle, and call box key and the men from SWAT.

One big difference exists between a military unit and SWAT, however. The Los Angeles cops in SWAT have a dual job. They don't sit back in a barracks, polishing their boots and cleaning rifles, waiting for hostilities to break out.

Instead, all SWAT team members are working policemen, assigned to the Metropolitan Division, itself a special crime suppression unit that ranges over the entire city. As regular Metro officers, SWAT men carry out the same assignments as others in the division. They saturate high crime areas with extensive patrols, wait through stake-outs, and take routine burglary reports.

On every shift, however, seven days a week, there are five SWAT cars on the street, each manned by two men. They wear civilian clothes or standard police blues. But when a SWAT call-up order suddenly cracks out over the police radio, they move.

Like Clark Kent jumping into a telephone booth to change into his red hero suit, SWAT men pull on their distinctive jump suits and are transformed from ordinary street policemen to commandos in the concrete jungle.

Says one of LAPD's top brass, "They're the guys who land on the beach first."

To SWAT, every callup is a live-action dress rehearsal for the time when the stakes are really big—an organized riot, a guerrilla raid, or a full-blown insurrection. None of these things may ever happen, but as the city's shock troops, SWAT is prepared.

When SWAT confronts a barricaded suspect who is armed and obviously



The above series of photographs were taken by the author after he intercepted a police call. He found that two armed criminals, apparently in the process of burglarizing a house in a residential neighborhood of Los Angeles, were discovered by

the occupants who fled and notified the police. SWAT teams were called in, surrounded the house, and tried to convince the hoodlums to surrender. When they refused after about four hours, SWAT personnel fired teargas into the bungalow.

dangerous, it employs its "three Ts": Time, Talk, and Tactics. Experience has shown that if a suspect is cornered and knows he's up against a superior force that means business, he's inclined to give up, particularly if he has time to think about it.

"We're not door kickers," says a SWAT sergeant. "We're in no big hurry. A suspect who is cornered isn't going anywhere. We can wait as long as he needs to make up his mind what he wants to do."

But SWAT also doesn't believe in risking the lives of lawmen or innocent bystanders if a gunman or terrorist poses a threat. "The man with a gun, a stick of dynamite, or a bomb in his hands has put himself in a position of danger," says SWAT. "We didn't put him there. If someone says he's going to kill, we believe him." And in such cases, SWAT is prepared to shoot if that's the only option.

That's what happened last fall at a hotel just outside the Los Angeles International Airport. About 9 o'clock in the morning, the Venice Division received a call that a woman was screaming for help inside one of the rooms. When officers responded, they found the cries coming from a locked bathroom. They were also greeted by a volley of three shots. The woman was being held captive. The gunman shouted that he would kill his hostage and anyone who tried to take him. The call went out for SWAT.

Recalls Cpt. Searcy, "It was a text book case and the teams handled it just as they had rehearsed." First, the entire fourth floor where the incident was unfolding was cleared of all civilians. Regular Venice Division officers were replaced by SWAT teams who systematically blocked off every possible escape route. Then they settled down, ready to talk the suspect into surrendering or to take him. For hours, it was a stand-off.

The gunman refused to talk to SWAT negotiators. Soon the mystery man barricaded in the washroom was identified as Howard Lee McDowell, 29, from Pittsburgh. Of critical importance, he was under indictment for heroin trafficking back East and had a criminal record that included armed robbery.

The woman he was holding had been his girl friend but as far as police were concerned now, she was a hostage, since her life had been threatened by McDowell. With a listening device attached to the bathroom door, the police monitored the conversation inside and gradually became convinced their man wasn't going to surrender.

SWAT was ready to make a forced entry any time the officer in charge gave the word. They could easily pick the lock or force the door out of the frame with a hydraulic jack. The hours dragged by as authorities waited for their suspect to realize he was hopelessly trapped and give up. But he refused.

The wait that started Tuesday morning was still going on more than 24 hours later. At that point, SWAT decided to take the initiative. Team members donned tear gas masks and when everyone was in position, gas was forced under the bathroom door. Soon the door opened a crack and then swung clear.

McDowell emerged with one arm around the girl's neck and her body pushed ahead of him as a shield. He stepped clear with his gun jammed into the terrified hostage's side. The time for talk was over.

McDowell stood six foot four inches tall and towered over the girl. That made it bad for him because from across the room, a SWAT man took a bead on his head and squeezed off one shot from his AR-15. In the SWAT "after-action" report, the whole story was wrapped up laconically: "One shot fired by SWAT. One fatality."

That isn't the way SWAT wants to see such confrontations end. For all of the firepower at its command, it prides itself on a solid record of taking suspects without a shoot out. Its men often come under hostile fire, but in most cases, they are able to flush the gunman after putting in a few rounds of tear gas.

The type of missions now assigned SWAT covers both ordinary law enforcement problems as well as counter-terrorist or anti-guerrilla operations. The difference often is mainly the size of the hostile force and the trigger for the confrontation.

If a holdup man fumbles a bank robbery, for example, and in a desperate move to escape, grabs a customer hostage, that gunman with his prisoner, cornered in a building, is basically no different from a political terrorist who holds a government official hostage. Rescuing the victim and apprehending the suspect are the goals in either incident.

If police corner armed bandits after a jail break or holdup attempt, and the suspects take refuge in a house and prepare to hold off lawmen, that situation is similar to besieging a fortified position held by heavily armed terrorists.

A demented or drug-crazed man with a high powered rifle blasts away at citizens from a rooftop. Taking him, in the SWAT book, involves the same tactics as flushing a sniper who puts lawmen under fire from a concealed position.

These days, it's also grown increasingly common for armed extremists to try to lure lawmen into traps. In police jargon, this is known as a "set up." Numerous policemen around the country have been murdered in such ambushes. Consequently, SWAT has developed sophisticated counter-ambush tactics.

"Terrorists are more sophisticated than street rioters," says Cpt. Searcy. "To deal with them takes more planning and training." SWAT does that, using, at



When the author arrived on the scene, the suspects were still inside, apparently trying to minimize the effect of the gas by holding wet towels to their faces. Their effort was unsuccessful and each surrendered. The photos shot the SWAT mem-

bers covering the house, advancing and then taking the two suspects into custody. The gas grenades set the house ablaze and the SWAT team stayed alert in case there were additional suspects inside the bungalow. One fireman cracked as he moved in to fight the fire, "You guys sure know how to set buildings on fire!"

# More About SWAT...

by M.L. Jones

In 1974 after the SLA shootout, the Los Angeles Police Department's SWAT team became famous overnight. Letters poured in from law enforcement agencies from all over the United States, asking for details on how to organize SWAT-type units. Even the U.S. armed forces wanted to know more about its tactics and training.

Today there are literally hundreds of large and small SWAT-type units throughout the country. SOF receives many inquiries about SWAT, its methods, and its weapons. In 1977 Bryon B. Hill, a policeman who lives in Enid, Oklahoma, wrote us, declaring:

"In regards to SWAT type missions as a police function, I have found it hard to impossible to find any manuals or publications on the subject as a training aid. I was hoping that you might be able to provide me with a list or suggest sources for such publications."

Nich Ladas, SOF's SWAT editor, replied to this letter. His answer is invaluable to anyone interested in SWAT techniques, and we hereby print it as a public service:

*With reference to your inquiry regarding SWAT publications, we certainly appreciate your dismay at the scarcity*

*of available material for SWAT training purposes. This is due in large part, however, to the relative newness of the now popular SWAT concept. A word of caution is in order here: As SWAT techniques and tactics involve a great deal of danger, it is imperative that competent instructors be available. This is an absolute necessity! Although various SWAT techniques are life-saving in context, they may also be deadly to the unskilled. Witness the danger in the handling of explosives!*

*Regarding sources of information, excellent SWAT guidelines have been established by the FBI. Also, lesson plans and guidelines may be available from the larger police departments, such as the Los Angeles and New York City Police Departments. An official inquiry on your department's letterhead may bring welcome results.*

*For specific training, define your subjects first, then seek out individual texts for the specific topics. The Army or Marine Corps Sniping Manual is an excellent reference for counter-sniping tactics, for example. The U.S. Army's Marksmanship Training Unit at Ft. Benning, Georgia, is superb for basic marksmanship training, and their manuals are*

*definitive. For scuba—any of the good basic books would suffice. For advanced training, the various military manuals supply much available information. But, again, we caution against any training procedures without the use of skilled instructors. Certain necessary skills cannot be acquired from a textbook alone; there can be no substitute for personal instruction from experienced, capable instructors. To do otherwise could prove very dangerous indeed!*

One example of ignorant exploitation of SWAT's fame, after the 1974 SLA shootout, was a now-defunct network television show. The TV producers never asked for technical advice from the Los Angeles Police Department's SWAT team, and none was provided. They just roared off, making up wild escapades for TV audiences without so much as a backward glance at real-life SWAT organization and techniques.

As the 1970s draw to a close, the need for well-trained SWAT-type police units becomes more apparent. As Nich Ladas notes, training and skill are mandatory for these units, and as Norman Sklarewitz's article shows, professional expertise is as important as intensive firepower.

times, elaborate scenarios in which its teams are pitted against clever and well equipped "terrorists."

"It's just a matter of specialization," says a SWAT sergeant. "If there's an explosive device found, you call the bomb squad. If a murder has been committed, then you want homicide detectives. But if you have an armed, barricaded suspect, then yell for SWAT. If he's still in the building when we get there, I assure you he won't get away. That's a guarantee."

Keeping that promise is clearly getting harder and harder. In recent years, there's been steady, serious escalation in the violence encountered by SWAT teams.

"Militants are armed with shotguns, hand grenades, and automatic rifles," says a SWAT officer. "We give every suspect the opportunity to surrender, but more and more we're getting gun fire in reply."

That was, of course, the situation when SWAT was handed the job of taking on the SLA in May 1974. Hundreds of lawmen converged on the frame bungalow in South Central Los Angeles where the six SLA fugitives were believed hiding.

Yet by orders of the Deputy Chief of Police, only 23 SWAT team members were actually to engage in that fire fight.

The volume of machine-gun fire that erupted from the SLA hideout astounded

lawmen. Despite the fact that SWAT has far better weapons than the average police department, it found itself out-gunned for most of that battle. Besides hand guns, the six besieged radicals were armed with a variety of rifles and carbines, all modified to shoot fully automatic, and a .30 caliber machine gun. Not only were the weapons of larger caliber than police .223s, but the SLA was well supplied with armor-piercing ammunition.

"I never thought I'd see the day when I'd go into action feeling inadequately armed," admits one SWAT sergeant. "But up against that firepower, my AR-15 was nothing."

Once he realized what his men were up against, Lt. Joseph Sonlitner, then SWAT's commander, put in an emergency request for submachine guns to return from the SLA. Permission was finally given and four such weapons were brought by a siren-screaming squad car to the SWAT teams. Employed by the lawmen were two German 9mm MP 40s and two M-16s.

After the incident, LAPD investigators concluded that the SLA members were equipped with 20 weapons: eight shotguns, six hand guns and six military-type semi-automatic rifles, all of which had been modified to fire fully automatic, by an arms specialist who had filed off

the sears. There were .30 cal M-2 carbines and a couple .30-06 semi-automatic rifles. The effect was like a BAR, according to police.

The tremendous level of fire from both sides that bloody afternoon still amazes all concerned. The SLA is estimated to have put out perhaps 5,000 rounds and the police responded with nearly as much.

"In two years with SWAT, the most I ever fired in action was nine rounds from my AR-15," says one veteran of the SLA fight. "That day, I went through 130 rounds in something like the first two minutes."

Now this man keeps his ammo pouches stuffed with 20 and 30-round magazines. If there's a "next time"—and every man on SWAT fully expects it to come—he wants to be prepared.

It's no secret that since the SLA incident, SWAT has gone over its tactics and equipment to see where improvements could be made. They would like to have some type of armored personnel carrier so they could approach a hostile strong point without exposing themselves. As things stand, if a citizen or lawman is wounded in a gun fight and goes down, there's almost no way to rescue him without risking more casualties.

Local city officials, however, aren't inclined to approve the purchase of such a vehicle. Without any doubt, they would

immediately come under attack from citizens groups who could claim the police have acquired "tanks."

After the SLA incident, Dr. Ralph Abernathy, President of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, asked, "Would 6,000 rounds of ammunition and 75 missiles of tear gas have been fired into just one house if the structure had been located in the white community? It must be demonstrated that the black community is not a casual battleground for extraordinary military operations."

Ramona Ripston, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California, said, "The original concept of SWAT as a unit with special training that could avoid violence when dealing with potentially dangerous persons is a beautiful idea. But there has been a perversion of that idea. SWAT has turned into an armed assault force. What we have now is an army running around that resorts to overkill rather than attempting to reduce the level of violence."

Still, Los Angeles officials defend the level of fighting that took place during the controversial SLA exchange by pointing to the fact that the fugitives were known to be well armed, dangerous, and certainly not afraid.

Today SWAT has a Crisis Negotiation Team that is designed to swing into action when a situation can be defused by non-violent means. But the theory in Los Angeles is that negotiation does not mean compromise or pay-off. "Negotiation is a means to the end and not the end itself," says Cpt. Searcy. By that he clearly means that the terrorist isn't going to benefit from his actions.

"Just because someone makes demands at the point of a gun doesn't mean he's anything but a law-breaker," says the L.A. police commander. "Negotiation is just the peaceful means of reaching our ultimate goal which is to put the criminal in jail and prosecute him." In jail no deals are made for freedom.

Since SWAT was formed, the nature of the opposition has changed. In the late 1960s, the main threat to law and order was often by demonstrations that turned violent. Then SWAT was organized to handle protests that endangered life and property. In the early 1970s, although such mass street violence was almost gone, its place was taken by the so-called urban guerrilla—the Symbionese Liberation Army, the Black Liberation Army, and the Weather Underground. For several years those groups posed the major security threat as they engaged in criminal acts in the name of their own political creeds.

In recent months, however, the shift has been toward international terrorism—aircraft hijacking in which plane and passengers are held for ransom for some wild political cause as well as assassination and kidnapping of prominent political and business figures.

To cope with this latest type of outlaw, SWAT has again gone back to school. Searcy and key members of his staff study every incident of terrorism and exchange information and tactics with other experts. One of these was Col. Ulrich Wegener who commanded a secret West German outfit known as *Grenzschutzgruppe-9*, or Border Protection Group 9. It became world famous in October 1977 when it staged its incredible commando raid at Mogadishu, Somali, in which Wegener led his men in the rescue of a Lufthansa 737 and its 86 hostage passengers.

A political motivated criminal is particularly dangerous, an LAPD official says, because of his dedication. "His cause is greater to him than the obstacles he faces or even more important than his own life. The terrorist, the fanatic, is the toughest opponent, because his life means nothing compared to his cause."

Police are finding militants armed with more than rhetoric, too. Hand grenades have turned up during searches, and rifles and shotguns in the hands of wanted suspects have become almost commonplace. Police report a steady flow of weapons to the urban underground.

Continued on page 86



## The Snubnose .45!

**GUNS & AMMO MAGAZINE:** "... it is a gun that a shooter will be able to rely on with utter confidence." "... The Detonics is an engineer's dream." "The Detonics .45 on our cover is the smallest pistol of its type available. It's short action, and low recoil make it a most desirable gun for self-defense, and law enforcement."

**GUN WORLD:** "Proof positive that potent performance can be packed in a petite package!" "The (Detonics) used in Gun World's tests showed flawless functioning."

**GUN WEEK:** "... The Detonics .45 is exceptionally easy to carry and conceal. The balance of this pistol is excellent..." "... (the Detonics) is capable of functioning well with unusually stiff reloads..."

**SOLDIER OF FORTUNE:** "Workmanship is flawless. The overall impression of the Detonics is that of a beautifully fitted, solid weapon." "Disassembly is sheer simplicity." "The Detonics is a no-nonsense, very compact and powerful weapon."

**LAW & ORDER:** "... it impressed us as a functional, easy-to-control handgun. Compact enough to carry any place you can pack a snub .38, it offers vastly superior firepower and stopping power, and higher rate of accurate rapid fire."

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# Riding & Fighting With Grey's Scouts

## **The Cavalry Rides Again...**

by Major L.H. "Mike" Williams  
former Officer, Commanding 1 Squadron, Grey's Scouts

**Part 1 - Rutenga**



L.H. "Mike" Williams enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1942 and subsequently saw combat as a "grunt" with the 88th Division in Italy. He was commissioned at Ft. Benning in 1948, and was discharged as a captain in 1960. He was one of the first officers assigned to the 10th Special Forces when it was activated in 1952. In 1953, he was ordered to Korea where he commanded the 7th Bn, 3rd Partisan Infantry Regiment, which was composed of between 1200 and 1500 North Korean and Chinese defectors. Upon his return from Korea, he was assigned to the 77th Special Forces Group and later served with the 101st Airborne.

In 1964, he joined Michael Hoare's mercs operating out of Kamina Base in Katanga. After the U.S. stated, "there are no Americans fighting in the Congo," Williams was "arrested" by the CIA and escorted out of the country.

In 1976, he joined the Rhodesian Army as a captain, was promoted to major, and prior to his resignation was commanding officer of 1 Squadron, Grey's Scouts, Rhodesia's famed mounted infantry.

Someone once said, "If you spend more than 10 years as a soldier, you'll never be worth a damn as anything else."

How true that is I don't know, but on 20 December 1975, I found myself heading back to Africa for the second time. Back into the killing business. World War II, Korea, and the Congo were behind me. I felt like the male counterpart to Jonathan Winters' Granny Frickert, World's Oldest Airline Stewardess. Only in my case, I wasn't a stewardess, just another mercenary looking for that "one last war."

Angola in 1975 was coming apart at the seams. My intention was to use Wild Geese contacts I'd made in Katanga in April 1964, to join UNITA.

A stop at an embassy in D.C., which I won't name, produced information that ex-Congolese mercenaries weren't popular in Zaire. However, the UNITA Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Jorge Sangumba, was allegedly hiring at the Intercontinental Hotel in Lusaka, Zambia. Pan Am to London, East African Airways to Nairobi and Zambian Airways to Lusaka, Zambia, got me to Dr. Sangumba. Unfortunately, 3,500 MPLA and Cuban troops had overrun the major UNITA base in Huambo, which is located in central Angola, before my meeting with Dr. Sangumba. He had had no communications of any kind with Dr. Jonas Savimbi and therefore could make no decision relative to hiring me at that time.

Major L. H. "Mike" Williams served as Deputy Commander of Rhodesia's Grey's Scouts. Williams is running for Congress in the 1st Congressional District in Florida. For once, vote Democratic.

Three days in Lusaka convinced me that anything was better than Zambia. As with many black African states, Zambia had suffered from a deterioration of public services, outrageous prices, and lack of cleanliness.

A chap I'd met at the Intercontinental Hotel suggested I try the Rhodesian Army. As I was going to Johannesburg and was passing through Salisbury, it wouldn't hurt to talk with them. The last time I had passed through Salisbury was in March 1964. I expected changes. I wasn't disappointed.

Eleven years before, Meikle's Hotel was a small white-washed building with a British colonial atmosphere. Checking in this time, the surroundings were strictly New York modern.

After a few days, I moved to more economical quarters in the Windsor Hotel on Baker Avenue and started contact-



Major Williams and SOF Editor/Publisher Robert Brown appear at SOF-sponsored press conference held in Miami. Williams outlined the Castro-Cuban threat to Rhodesia and the rest of Africa.

ing government offices. Six weeks later I was still contacting government offices. The Rhodesian Army took a day and a half to say "thanks but no thanks." The British South African Police (BSAP), utterly polite, doggedly kept insisting that I furnish them with a letter from the FBI. I showed them a standard form letter from my local Police Department, giving me a clean bill of health.

"No matter, old chap, you simply must have a letter from the FBI . . . J. Edgar and all that, y'know." The fact that J. Edgar was dead didn't seem to faze them. I hadn't tried the Rhodesian counterpart of the Girl Scouts yet but was giving it careful consideration.

Somewhere about the end of the sixth week, a member of the Special Branch showed up at the Windsor. He asked if I would meet with his superior who wanted to talk to me. I agreed but told

him I had decided to leave for Jo'burg in three days.

The next afternoon his superior showed up and, after discussing general topics and looking at my papers, asked if I could meet with his boss. At that rate, I should have worked my way up to a meet with the Prime Minister within a week or so. I finally met with the third Special Branch representative and agreed to something he suggested. I won't discuss that assignment for security reasons.

A word here about Special Branch. They are super people and without their help and trust I would never have gotten in the Army.

Shortly after the last meeting I was taken to Army Headquarters one afternoon and met with an Officers' Selection Board composed of a major and several colonels. I gave them a detailed resume which they carefully read and obviously disbelieved. I learned later that their skepticism was based upon previous experiences with other Americans, mostly unpleasant. A significant number of American enlisted men had deserted due to their inability to adjust to the Rhodesian military's way of doing things. Others had left when they were found out to be bullshit artists.

The OSB made it clear to me that there were no mercenaries in Rhodesia. The only way anyone was going to serve in Rhodesia, in a military capacity, was as a member of the Regular Army.

A direct commission in the grade of Captain was offered me which I accepted. The last questions asked me were if I would object to serving in the bush for lengthy periods of time and if I would be willing to assume command of "unusual troops."

I found out later what "unusual troops" meant.

While I was waiting for the Army to process my papers, I began to run low on money. An officer in Army Headquarters, who shall remain nameless, wrote me a note to the Paymaster and I received an emergency loan of \$50.00. I could visualize the look on the face of a U.S. Army finance officer if a civilian walked into his office and handed him a note requesting a loan. The Rhodesians are something else. This wasn't the only time during my stay in Rhodesia that they demonstrated their basic decency and trust in an individual.

After I was sworn in, I reported to Headquarters Protection Company's Old Cranborne Barracks. An elderly captain, former British Army, took me under his wing and helped me get "kitted out." His kindness and sense of humor made him a real friend and counterbalanced some of the "Colonel Blimp" types I was later to meet.

The Rhodesian Army is a small organization. It is based on the British Army; uniforms are British in appearance, the customs of the service, close order drill, and the manual of arms, with minor mod-

ifications, are all British. Many of the officers and non-coms have served in the British Army. At the top, the thinking is largely British, from a tactical viewpoint. The "old boy" network of personalities utilized within the respective chains of command on higher levels is all-pervasive. This isn't all bad, however. There were times I desperately needed supplies and the "old boy" network got them to me damned quickly, avoiding the maze of quartermaster red tape.

I was introduced to tea-time. There was tea at 1000 hours, tea at 1500 hours, and copious amounts of tea in between. There was also coffee and there was booze. A cold beer at lunchtime wasn't all bad!

One thing that impressed me about the Rhodesian Army, in 1976, was the esprit de corps found in the average officers' mess. People had pride in their unit and a deep love for their country. I spent 10 days or so at Cranborne Barracks, then was posted to 3 Protection Company, Mount Darwin.

Northeast of Salisbury, the small town at Mount Darwin has borne the brunt of the terrorist war for five years. The area is one of tobacco farms and cattle. Farmers in this part of Rhodesia are old hands in the war.

A terrorist attack with RPG7s, RPDs and AKs against a Farmer's Social Club one night brought about the following reaction: when the first rocket hit the roof, the farmers swarmed out of the building with FNs, Uzis, 303s, 45s, 9mm Stars, and hosed the area. The "Freedom Fighters" hauled ass, leaving several wounded and two dead behind.

When I arrived in Darwin I was briefed by the intelligence officer as to Terr operations in the area. Ambushes, Russian TM-46 land mines, and butchering the locals were the order of the day.

3 Protection Company's mission was to furnish armed escorts for construction equipment, graders, and bulldozers, building roads. Convoys to Mucumburu, a village near the Mozambican border, were another responsibility for 3 Company.

The company commander, a major, sat down with me and clarified what the selection board had meant when they said "unusual troops."

"Mike, officers assigned to protection companies are either too old to command first line troops or else the Army wants to keep an eye on them."

"What's unusual about these troops?" I asked.

"They're colored. African mothers and European fathers, or the other way around." He lit a horrible smelling pipe, "The Europeans shun them and the Africans hate them. They're outcasts from all levels of society."

Further conversation brought out that the Asians, Moslems, and Hindus within the company had the best educations and did outstanding jobs as signallers and clerks, both in company headquarters

and supply. The Colored beat them unmercifully when they felt like it.

"Never trust these buggers," Major Tom said. "They will run at the first shot and shoot you in the bargain if you get in the way!"

Unusual troops, indeed.

We were losing an average of three vehicles a week to mines. I rode the convoy to Mukumburu, around a terrain feature called the Bull's Nose, several times in an effort to determine what status of combat readiness 3 Company was in. The troops were alert but I found empty Coke bottles, tire irons, jacks, and chains thrown carelessly in the back of the vehicles. This crazy practice stopped when I pointed out what would happen to the Coke bottles if the vehicle hit a mine. The shortage of officers in protection



companies was causing problems, as there were insufficient company commanders to keep up with the increase in new companies being formed.

A month later, I was transferred to Llewellyn Barracks, Bulawayo, to take command of 5 Protection Company in a tactical role. 5 Company was to be given responsibility for guarding a vital rail link and bridge in the southeastern operational area.

During the last week of training at Llewellyn, I got two new subalterns, our equivalent of second lieutenants; both fresh from Gwelo, the School of Infantry. They looked about 14 years old and made me feel 89. Prior to deploying 5 Company to Rutenga in the southeastern operational area, I flew from Brigade Headquarters to JOC Rutenga for a briefing and a

tactical reconnaissance, to have a look at what I was to be responsible for.

The railway line segment linking the Ingezi bridge with Rutenga is 80 kms in length and runs through the middle of two Tribal Trust Lands, Matibi No. 1 on the northeast and Belingwe on the southwest directly across the railroad tracks.

During the months of May through August 1976, this link to South Africa was Rhodesia's life-line over which petrol, oil, food, and much needed supplies were being moved by Rhodesia Railways.

Terrorists knew full well the importance of the railway and began attacks against the system in April 1976, firing on locomotives and petrol tank cars with AKs, RPDs, and RPG7s. Two railway employees were killed and one wounded. As a result, train crews refused to work after dark, so the operation of the railway stopped at sundown.

We arrived at Rutenga on the afternoon of June 2 and relieved a Territorial Force Rifle Company that had been ambushed enroute from Ft. Victoria with one killed and several wounded. I took both sub-lieutenants with me on a fly-over from Rutenga to the bridge at Ingezi and back. What we saw gave us ulcers.

The railway snaked and twisted through cuts whose embankments rose almost vertically on either side of the tracks. One gook with an RPG7 or even an AK with tracer and good-bye tank cars. Further south to Rutenga the picture was almost as bad; open areas of 5-600 meters from which jutted *Kopjes* or hills of rock with heavy bush providing excellent field of fire, cover, and concealment.

To complete this dismal situation, Belingwe Tribal Trust Land (TTL) was a non-curfew area with total freedom of movement for people, vehicles, and donkey carts. Directly across the tracks was Matibi 1 TTL, a curfew area and a hotbed for terrorist activities. The terrorists were no fools. They would zap the trains as they passed, then simply run across the tracks, cache their weapons, and go to the nearest beer drink to celebrate.

If the Rhodesian Army wanted to test my command capabilities they sure as hell had picked the right situation.

A Company strength of 200 to secure a bridge and 80 kms of rail line would have been laughable had the situation not been as desperate as it was.

To patrol the tracks, Rhodesia Railways had furnished us with some gasoline-powered trolleys. Small, armored vehicles, they held a civilian driver and eight troops.

At 0200 hrs. on 4 June 1976, 2/Lt. Angus Scrace and five troopers were ambushed by five terrors who missed the trolley from a distance of about 30 meters. The terrors evidently thought the searchlight atop the trolley was that of a locomotive and fired high. Scrace re-

turned the fire with SLRs and a Bren gun, the trolley rattling down the track and the driver busily engaged in talking with whatever ants were crawling on the trolley floor.

That day I went to a local rancher, Bob Van der Sande, for some horses and tack. Bob is an Afrikaaner and has ranched in the area some 30 years. I not only got my horses but he put me in touch with other ranchers who were to contribute additional horses as well.

When I went to the JOC Rutenga commander and told him what I wanted to do, he apparently felt that this was ample evidence that as a Texan I was not only crazy but thought I was John Wayne as well. I pointed out that if the railroad stopped running, all of Rhodesia would be riding horses since there wouldn't be any petrol for anything; he said he'd see.

Horses have been implements of war since Xerxes and the Phoenicians, and I felt that given the area I had to cover, the type of terrain, and the handful of troops I had, then by God, "the cavalry would ride again."

As a second-class ride is better than a first-class walk, I had no problem with volunteers from the Colored.

There were no formal classes in equitation. The drill was as follows: a) bring out horse, b) introduce "rider" to horse and get him mounted, c) point horse in desired direction and urge rider to stay on. If required, d) pick up rider and take to medics.

Strangely enough, the casualties were few. The condition of one soldier who landed head-first in a thorn bush resulted in tremendous improvement in Basic Equitation One classes. People stayed on. I set up a firing field expedient range to condition the horses to SLR fire [the SLR the author refers to is the FN semi-automatic rifle M1949 in 7.62mm], hand grenades, Bren gun, and later Uzis. It consisted of cardboard silhouette targets set up at 10, 20, and 30 meters. The troopers would ride down one side, engaging the targets, do a 180 degree turn, and ride back, once again engaging the targets.

Each would fire five magazines while running the course. Five hits out of a magazine was satisfactory. In fact, one hit per target by each trooper was damn good.

Firing was done at the walk, trot, and canter, respectively.

I also taught them to execute standard infantry formations while mounted . . . echelon right, echelon left, line of skirmishers, etc.

Counterambush drill while mounted depended on the terrain and distance from which the ambush was initiated. If the enemy opened up from 50 meters, we would use the mobility provided by the horses and try to outflank the ambush. However, most ambushes would occur between 25 and 50 meters. In this

case, we would dismount, establish a line of fire, and maneuver. Unfortunately, the horses would often bolt—which could result in a long walk back to base.

The remainder of instruction was On The Job Training. Patrolling started along the railway. The looks from the locals were incredulous. In addition to the tremendous increase in mobility, I received an added bonus from the horses. The Africans were scared to death of the animals. Psychological warfare, no less.

The inevitable happened. At last light, while approaching a kraal, a mounted five-man stick was fired on from the edge of the line of huts. The horses bolted but in the direction of the incoming fire. What followed, as best I could sort out later, was a chaotic mass of wild-eyed



bush ponies, shit-scared troops, tracers flying in all directions, chickens, goats, women, children, and terrors caroming off each other and fading rapidly into the sunset. One tracer set eight huts on fire. The cavalry had arrived.

More horses were coming in and I was faced with both logistical and administrative problems. Food and additional space for the animals.

My headquarters was at Rutenga, the southern terminus of my area of responsibility. I had located Platoon Headquarters spaced at intervals between Rutenga and Ingezi. From a command and control standpoint, Sarahuru would be best.

Located roughly mid-way along the line segment, it afforded water, unloading facilities, grazing and a house for a C.P. It also afforded an African grain

mill, a bus stop, a brothel with eight African whores, and a village full of terror sympathizers. We moved to Sarahuru-by-the-Sea. The nearest water was the Rhodesia Railways tank by the station.

Attacks against the railway were sporadic, at this time, but Joint Operations Center (JOC) Rutenga troops were having daily contacts with terrorists about 20 clicks to our Northeast in Matibi 1 TTL.

On the night we completed our move to Sarahuru, a call sign from one of the Territorial Force rifle companies opened fire on a curfew breaker in the bush some 600 meters to our southeast. Three stray MAG machine gun rounds hit the C.P. The troops guarding the C.P., thinking we were being zapped, opened up on the village behind us, adversely affecting the structural integrity of the grain mill, the brothel windows, the local bus parked for the night, and one sexually segregated outhouse. Aggressiveness we had!

I was employing foot patrols at night and horses by day, giving the Infantry time during the day to rest, with those awake OPing the tracks with binoculars. I was still running the trolleys from Rutenga to Ingezi and back. This was July and bitter cold. The seasons are reversed and the Rhodesian lowveld winters are brutally cold. Traveling 25 mph in the trolley, wind whipping through cracks in the floor, from 1900 to 0400 the following morning was a nightly torture for the troops. I rode it as often as possible to keep morale up but the colored's reaction was basically that anyone who did it voluntarily was nuts.

Train traffic and volume were now staggering. It wasn't unusual to see locomotives pulling as many as 38 petrol cars to South Africa. Service was now on a 24-hour basis.

Suddenly the terrors came alive. Two trains, both northbound from Rutenga, passed through Sarahuru; the first got through. There was a god-awful boom and the second derailed, tearing up 100 meters of track and strewing cars in all directions.

I got to the site with troops about 15 minutes later. The scene was only about eight kms north from the C.P. Russian TNT detonated electrically and a note left to me stating that the terrors would destroy the railroad and with it Security Forces. Childish bull-shit.

There was a lot of movement in a kraal on the Matibi side of the track. I put up a flare and people started running into the bush some 100 meters away from the huts. In a curfew area, no one is allowed more than 50 meters away from buildings or they are fair game.

The platoon sergeant got his people in a line of skirmishers and started firing at the running figures. We swept through the kraal. That was no spontaneous bug-out. Doors to huts were locked. Cattle and goats penned. A planned evacuation.

Not a thing we could do until daylight. In the meantime, two trolleys arrived with African repair crews to clean up the mess.

Three nights later, the line was blown again in the same place. More Russian TNT.

"Five Nine, this is Zero."

"Zero Five Nine, Go."

"Five Nine, Charlie Tangos have hit the line. What is your response time?"

"Zero Five Nine, moving now, figures one zero."

This time, one of my call-signs at the site had taken auto fire from the same kraal we searched during the last explosion.

By the time we arrived at the rendezvous to meet guides, it was 2230 hours. The 4th of July. Horses would be brought up at first light for a follow-up.

In the meantime we would have to take a calculated risk. Night deployment by vehicle is dangerous and gets hairy. The possibility of ambush is great. A more conservative tactic would have been to wait 'til morning at first light. This would have given the terrors running time and I felt they had decided to wait near the sabotage area to ambush any lead scouts I might send. I wasn't wrong.

Two guides met us about 500 meters south of the attack site. I'd ordered the vehicles halted, de-bussed the troops and we'd hiked in. The guides were with the call sign fired on and pointed out the kraal. They'd heard no dogs barking to indicate movement away from the huts.

The Rhodesian Army discouraged field grade officers from physically leading troops, as they feel this is a Subbie's job. I had just been promoted to major and

one of my Subbies was in Rutenga, the other at the Ingezi Bridge.

Forty sets of white teeth and 80 rolling eyeballs surrounded me.

I remembered the words of warning from Major Tom, commenting on protection company troops. "Those buggers will run at the first round. Never turn your back on them or trust them in a contact." I was about to find out if he was right.

I briefed the section leaders [equivalent to U.S. Army's squad leader] with me, cautioning them about wild firing and the difficulty of control at night. We started off across a cornfield with the guides leading. Stalks of corn cracked underfoot, sounding like field artillery. I was sure we sounded like a herd of rhino. The approach march covered about 300 meters and I could barely make out distant outlines of a large kraal. It appeared to consist of 15 to 20 huts. I stopped at a fence and counted noses. All present. Past the fence and onto muddy ground. My feet were sopping wet and corn stalks thudded against my SLR barrel. The five magazines in chest webbing pulled at the straps around my neck and I was sweating. The wedge formation moved into a line of skirmishers. A trail running north-south had to do as a Line of Departure (LD), Rhodesians call it a Start Line. LD or Start Line—when you cross it, that's when the guts start churning and the balls start retracting. I had no idea what these people would do, so I took four men with me, leaving the Platoon Sergeant with the formation, and scouted out the nearest huts. I told him not to zap us on the way out or back. Moving out, I was aware that at this point I could get it from an AK in front or an SLR from the rear.

Nothing moved in the kraal. Going back to the formation, an AK opened up from the food huts on the side of the hill. Dogs started barking like crazy from the rear of the kraal line. We put up flares and commenced firing. I put some tracer into the food huts and yelled in the Bren gunner's ear to traverse and search. Tracers were hitting the huts, ricocheting over the ridge line to the rear of the food huts.

Smoke, then orange flames started from the roofs of the huts and spread with the wind. By now the entire kraal was afire. We got up and assaulted, using marching fire. Two bodies and AK brass were found later near the food huts.

At first light, choppers with fire force came in, landing trackers who circled the area until they picked up spoor of eight, heading from the railroad to the kraal, but lost it in the rocks on the ridge line. An additional three set of tracks headed across the rail line into Belingwe TTL where the locals deliberately obliterated them by milling their cattle, whose hooves crushed all signs of terr boots.



We counted a total of 29 huts burnt, two suspects dead, one of my people hit in the face with a piece of rock from a ricochet.

After this action on July 4 there were no further terr operations against the railroad until four months later in November.

I was transferred to 6 Protection Company at Umtali, as there was a need for a temporary company commander for a short period of time.

*In the next issue of SOF, "Mike" Williams will continue his description of his part in the development and training of mounted infantry in the Rhodesian army.*

#### **ELECT A PROFESSIONAL...**

*Major Mike Williams, formerly the highest ranking American working for the Government (including the multi-racial transition government) in Rhodesia, is now running for Congress as a conservative Democrat in retiring Congressman Sikes' First District in northern Florida. Mike needs money for the campaign. Any SOFers interested in putting their money where their mouths are should pass it to the "Mike Williams for Congress Campaign," % Mrs. Bonnie Ruffin, Treasurer, P.O. Box 213, Valpariso, FL 32580.*



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# Counter Insurgency In S.W. Africa

## South Africa vs SWAPO Terrorists

by Al J. Venter



The story may be apocryphal, but judging by the depth of sentiment expressed when it is recounted, I doubt it.

The way it was told to me by a senior member of Swapo's external military command in Addis Ababa a few years ago, it goes like this—the timing is said to be shortly before the first World War and General Louis Bothe's Allied invasion of *Deutsche Sud West*.

Apparently the Ovambo nation, already long-standing opponents of German Colonial rule in their corner of a volatile continent, had rejected certain proposals concerning their administration. They were not interested in the White man's authority and said as much to the ranking *Hauptman*.

A German soldier then dressed himself in the garb of a minister of religion, enticed an Ovambo group into a Church—ostensibly for Sunday worship—and then had them all gunned down by his troops.

The incident which happened more than half a century ago has left its mark.

Cavalry to the rescue! Horse unit on line in bush, moving over obstacles instead of around them. Middle trooper has rifle grenade ready for action. Mounted units move through bush three times as fast as terrorists, have excellent contact and kill rates, being able to run down their opponents after fights.

Those Ovambos who are prepared to talk about their recent past maintain that their people have never really forgotten the ruse which resulted in the deaths of so many of them. Since then this dissident nation, which gave the Germans so much trouble and caused as many headaches to the Portuguese north of the border, has always been somewhat circumspect about "getting together" with the authority of the day.

It is only in recent years that a group of Ovambo chiefs—like the Kavongos and the Caprivi leaders—sensing a growing military escalation along their flanks—invited South African forces in to provide protection. Yet there is also a minority who resents this "intrusion" as they call it.

For the truth is that the Ovambos are a fiercely proud and individualistic nation. And while there are today many Ovambos who welcome the South African

presence in their midst—and some are even prepared to fight for it—it is largely a problem of the continuing military campaign that there are some who do not.

As bitterly as the majority of these people resent the role of the "Liberation Fighters" who come across the border from Angola in bands during the dark hours to intimidate and kill those who do not cooperate, so too do some of them resent the fact that they have to play host to a sizeable South African force, notwithstanding the fact that were these soldiers to depart tomorrow, it would result in the immediate balkanization of large tracts of northern Southwest Africa in the Angolan revolutionary mold.

It is axiomatic, therefore, that they also resent the escalation of this continuing guerrilla struggle and the uncertainty that comes with any kind of military action: the land mines, the ambushes, counter attacks, static defences, patrols and also the fact that movement about many of their community and social

centers is often monitored by defender and aggressor alike.

Almost illogically it would seem to some, they resent too the political overtones that have crept into their everyday way of life, and the fact that if the South-west African imbroglio is not to be settled politically and with the cognizance of the Western nations, then there can *only* be a military solution.

More ominous, still, if the latter course be chosen, it might ultimately be settled largely on Ovambo soil.

And deep down there is more disquiet, this time at family level.

Many of the Ovambo people are now feeling the effects of border controls which cut the nation in half from their counterparts still resident in Angola. They do not understand why Angola's eradication of all links with the "White

previous night to a Swapo strike force passing through.

Invariably the greeting is correct and formal. It is rarely—if ever—in-gratiating, whether the strangers be black or white, for it is just not done to be overly friendly to one or other of the combatants in a continuing guerrilla struggle.

As one villager argued with convincing logic: He spoke in good Afrikaans—*'En hoekom nie?-'n fout kan my lewe kos.'* (And why not? A mistake could cost us our lives.)"

It is one of the anomalies of the continuing military campaign along South West Africa's northernmost border with Angola that while the majority of whites refer to their territory as they have al-

from the one kilometer-wide no-go area which has been locally termed the Jati Strip.

On inquiring of the locals there about the armed men who had passed through not long before, we were met with vacant stares of the kind usually reserved for the village idiot. No one in the kraal admitted they had even heard of Swapo, much less seen them; and that in spite of the fact that an army vehicle was demolished by a landmine within easy striking distance of the settlement barely 48 hours later.

In retrospect, it was clear that the insurgent group had probably seen us come and go, and since most of these self-appointed "Liberation Fighters" cache their uniforms and arms as soon as they enter South West Africa, there were probably a few of them among the villagers while we were there.



South" should result in a curtailment of their traditional liberties, even though the terrorists made much tactical military use of these freedoms in the past.

It is this struggle which sometimes, unknowingly, has ranged members of a single family against each other in a military conflict which, if not checked, threatens to envelop all of Southern Africa in a conflict which knows no par in modern African history.

For essentially, the war along the northern border of Southwest Africa could be regarded as the classical People's War, with roughly 400,000 of the Ovambo people caught in a cross fire between two opposing forces.

Because of this paradox, an Ovambo village will, consequently, extend exactly the same kind of greeting to a South African military patrol that it gave the

South African troops on patrol near Angolan border. Note patrol formation, with machine gunner up front carrying radio. (point man not shown), patrol leader, and FN rifleman with contact-breaking rifle grenade attached and ready for counter-ambush action. Machine gun is FN MAG.

ways known it, there is barely an Ovambo who calls it anything but Namibia.

There are similar contradictions in the Operational area, which today stretches in an unbroken line almost 1,000 kilometers along the frontiers with Black Africa.

During my own visit to Ovamboland during June this year I was able to observe several follow-up operations at first hand. One unit with whom I operated for a short while catfooted along a trail only a few hours old. It led from one of the regular crossing points out of Angola and ended at a village several kilometers

It's the same further into the interior. Point to fresh tracks left a night or two before by a ranging band of terrorists and the inhabitants become surly and uncommunicative. Only hours later is it possible to establish that a group of terrorists did, in fact, pass that way.

But, by then they have probably achieved their aims and are now safely ensconced back at base inside Angola.

And a local headman, who you know has had direct contact with a Swapo operational group, because two of his sons are office bearers in the military wing of the Party, will deny all knowledge of the movement; even though two Soviet grenades and an RPG rocket launcher were found hidden in an ant-hill about 350 meters from his kraal.





Mounted troops take a river on the run. These units are invaluable for running down fleeing terrorists.

Static position guarding mounted bivouac position near Angola. Weapons are from left: FN rifle, Browning light machine gun, and British designed Bren gun converted to .308.

Black and white South African Army troops hold conference during patrol along Angola border. This area has seen much action in past six months. Units such as this have had high kill ratio against terrors.





South African trooper takes a break on patrol. Terrain along Angolan border is sandy, flat, often waterless. Patrols average 6 kms per hour. Troop is armed with FN MAG machine gun.



South African troops on patrol along Angola frontier. Out of first five weapons identifiable, four are FN MAG belt-fed machine guns, one is FN rifle. These units played major role in attack on SWAPO bases deep inside Angola.

Ovambo troops and their South African officers await pre-patrol inspection at forward base camp in S.W. Africa. Note preponderance of light machine guns in this and other photos. S. African Army units seem to carry double the number of machine guns as their NATO counterparts.



# After Action Report: South African Strike Into Angola

by Devin Benson

There have been several important developments following South Africa's lightning strike against Swapo bases inside Angola. One of these military establishments was the main Swapo tactical headquarters, codenamed "Moscow," which lies at the former mining town of Cassinga, 250 kilometers north of the Southwest African border.

South African specialist forces hit at "Moscow" and several Swapo bases on the night of May 31. The unofficial death toll among Swapo supporters is reckoned in excess of 1,200 and an additional 120 prisoners of war. South African casualties include six killed (including one whose parachute did not open) and a score or more wounded, although Pretoria has remained tight-lipped about the actual number of wounded and the extent of their injuries.



Soviet-made anti-aircraft weapon taken by South African forces at SWAPO camp "Vietnam." Weapon is 14.5mm KVP machine gun produced by the USSR in 1950s.

Reports emanating from various Angolan centers indicate a dramatic reverse suffered by Swapo morale as a consequence of the raid. It is believed that the reason why Swapo leader Sam Nujoma left New York hurriedly in early June was to undertake a personal investigation into the results of the South African raid. Several prominent members of PLAN (the Peoples Liberation Army of Namibia), Swapo's military wing—appear to have been liquidated.

It is known that many were killed during the raid, others have been dismissed by Nujoma as "incompetent" and several hundred have been arrested (according to well placed sources) by the Angolan MPLA for desertion in the face of the enemy.

There is also a deep-seated fear that the movement may have been betrayed



South African troops with Iron Curtain weapons captured at one of two SWAPO bases raided by large S.A. forces. Man on far right holds Czech Model 27 submachine gun. Wooden-stocked SMGs in foreground are USSR WWII surplus PPSH-41. South Africa captured tons of Russian weapons in the two pronged raids.

friction in the past. FAPLA maintains it has a right to know what is going on in military establishments.

In addition to this, top FAPLA officers are dissatisfied at the manner in which Swapo has been carrying out its part of the agreement to conduct joint MPLA/Swapo action against UNITA insurgents operating in the Southern Angolan provinces of Cunene, Cuando and Cubango.

MPLA maintains that the first priority should be to eliminate UNITA, as this would then allow Swapo to operate against South African forces in Southwest Africa with secure lines of communication. Swapo's attitude has increasingly tended towards the view that the UNITA issue is an Angolan domestic matter.

Following the South African attack, Swapo forces now operational inside



SWAPO casualty receives medical attention from South African army medics during raid on SWAPO base codenamed "Vietnam." Some of 120 prisoners taken at two bases are shown in background. Over 1,200 were confirmed KIA.

Sources close to the headquarters of UNITA, one of the rebel movements which still maintains a liaison office in the Zambian capital, Lusaka, maintains that there were also "many" Cuban and MPLA forces killed. The number of dead and wounded Cubans is reliably given on Luanda Radio as "many dozens." The radio urged Angolan citizens to give blood as this was "desperately" needed.

Following the capture of several more Cubans in the ongoing campaign, the UNITA High Command has made another disturbing revelation—one which has been verified by diplomatic sources in the Angolan capital.

Because of a fairly consistent casualty ratio in her African adventures, Dr. Fidel Castro has recently sent to the continent almost 1,000 men who had been recruited among long term prisoners on the Caribbean isle. Prisoners have been given the option of staying in jail or joining the Cuban expeditionary forces in Africa. A fair proportion of prisoners accepted the offer.

The strike against Swapo bases has had other effects inside Angola.

by some of its own office bearers. The Swapo senior official in Luanda is reported to have complained that South African intelligence on the area where the raid took place was "brilliant." He maintained that there had been a betrayal of security.

Following the raid there are indications that FAPLA, the MPLA military wing has been evacuating Swapo groups from southern Angola and concentrating them at towns inside Angola. For obvious reasons such steps are to counter-act a repetition of the South African blitz.

There have also been unusual security activities around the remaining Swapo bases which have remained as staging posts close to the Southwest African border. Swapo units are said to be patrolling the area in vehicles and are firing indiscriminately on anyone approaching their units—including MPLA and Cuban elements who have been attempting to evaluate the effects of the recent action.

A more recent report states that Swapo's refusal to allow FAPLA elements access to Swapo bases has caused

Ovamboland—the northernmost Southwest African homeland, are severely restricted because of a shortage of stores and ammunition. Huge supplies of Swapo war materiel are known to have been destroyed by the South Africans. One blast which was detonated over an underground fuel storage tank could be seen for 70 kilometers.

For their part the South Africans—like the Rhodesians—have laid claim to massive supplies of communist war materiel.

There is some discussion about the nature of the mysterious "terrible weapon" which Luanda claims the South Africans used in their raid. There has been no comment from military authorities in Pretoria but it is known that the weapon was previously unknown in the Angolan theater of military activities and that it has a devastating kill ratio; this fits in with the report of massive Swapo losses against only a handful of South African casualties.



Inside South African "Hippo" armored personnel carrier. Vehicle, reinforced against landmines, has twin Browning machine guns, controlled by man on front, left. Driver is on right, with radio handled by second man on right. Glass is .30 caliber bullet-proof.



South African Army troops lift body of dead terrorist off Hippo armored vehicle during operations on Angolan border. Terrorists usually concentrate on civilians, try to avoid better trained and disciplined SA army troops.

And then—as sometimes happens in any war, especially when friends get

killed or hurt—one of the young officers on patrol, perhaps a little more zealous than most, ends up banging a few heads together because it is obvious that Swapo has enjoyed hospitality in the place. He is brought before his commanding officer and charged under military law for disobeying the explicit command that no man in uniform is to molest the locals in any way.

In many ways the war in Ovamboland differs from other continuing guerrilla campaigns in Africa.

In planning and execution it is totally different from Rhodesia's six-year war where much of the activity is concentrated around small-unit operations centered on using high-lying observation posts (OPs) to gather and pass on information. In contrast, Ovamboland is a stark, flat and featureless terrain, interspersed only irregularly by a few waterholes, isolated villages, and little else south of the Kunene.

While Salisbury's military planners are devoting an increasing proportion of military activity to what they term "externals ops" in Zambia and Mozambique, almost all that happens militarily in South West Africa is centered on Ovamboland.

The exception to this rule—as we have seen in the recent strikes on "Moscow" and "Vietnam" Swapo bases, is when rebel elements take to launching full-scale raids directly from Angola on to South African positions. Here the Springboks [nickname for the South African troopers] hit back at the source of the action, usually successfully.

In a military sense, the Ovamboland campaign of 1978 is also different from Portugal's decade-long wars in Africa.

For while the various Liberation movements waged a vicious war of attrition against the Portuguese, Swapo policy avoids any form of direct contact with the security forces unless it cannot be avoided. When a Swapo section leader does strike, the time, circumstances, and place are always of his choosing.

Usually he will restrict his activities to laying several landmines on routes which he knows are used by South African forces, after which he will pull back across the border into Angola.

Only rarely will he resort to ambush; and then only when he knows his options are limited and he has got to make a move because of pursuit and he is in danger of being cut off.

Consequently, if the army wishes to make contact with the enemy he has to find him first and much of this activity takes place on foot in a terrain where water often becomes more important a consideration than ammunition. It's a difficult and often backbreaking trudge through the sandy Ovamboland hinterland; the kind of country that soon shows a man for what he really is.

More recently, there have been several new developments. Only lately have horses and motorcycles been brought in to supplement infantry mobility.

There has also been a trend towards both forces operating in larger groups.

Whereas Swapo would formerly strike out in units of five or eight men at a time, these terrorists now tend to concentrate their forces, rarely venturing out with less than 15 men at a time, and often deploying groups as strong as 40. Inside Angola, adjacent to the border, observers have noted that Swapo elements sometimes patrol in groups ranging between 100 and 150.

As a consequence, South African patrols have had to be strengthened, for when contact is made with the enemy the outcome is as vicious a firefight as any seen in Southern Africa in recent years, involving the full gamut of sophisticated hardware, including rockets, machine guns, rifle grenades, automatic weapons, and occasionally, anti-personnel grenades.

The materiel used by Swapo is good. Supplied largely by Eastern Bloc communist states, it is every bit as effective as similar weapons used against United States forces in 10 years of war in Southeast Asia.

Gone are the days when five or eight-man patrols were able to go out for weeks at a stretch in search of action; these days most operations take place at platoon strength or more.

One of the biggest problems associated with the war is Swapo's reticence to come to grips with the South African army. It has been estimated, as a result, that very few of the troopers on the border ever see the enemy; one statistic quoted puts the figure at about two percent who have seen a terrorist—alive or dead.

For this reason, the Ovambo campaign remains at a very low level of intensity although the authorities in Windhoek and Pretoria are aware that any slackening of control could result in a major overnight escalation of hostilities.

A major proportion of Swapo's activities in the region are concentrated on intimidating the local population to follow the Party line "no matter what." An age-old insurgency tactic, it is Swapo's contention that the process of undermining government authority remains a prime objective.

And to achieve this aim, the terrorists will stop at nothing. One old man, who was resident in a kraal near Ombalantu north-west of Oshikati, was visited by a band of terrorists one evening and accused of being a government informer; it later transpired that he had taken his wife to the government-run clinic in town.

The man was killed in front of his relatives and his body removed. It was later found, decapitated, and strung from a tree in the Jati Strip, festooned with Swapo propaganda leaflets.

As blatant as Swapo is in running its political campaign in the disputed regions, it is as subtle in looking for exploitable soft military targets. The movement's spokesmen have declared several times that they are content to bide their time, which is one of the reasons why Swapo is so insistent that South African forces withdraw from Ovamboland to a line south of Windhoek *before* discussions about a settlement are started.

Meanwhile the conflict goes on. Both sides have long ago learned that for each strike there is a counter-strike—for each tactic something to counteract it. But then time weighs heavily on both the defender and the attacker, for the South African government has every intention that the territory will be independent at the end of this year.

As fighting men, Swapo have been variously rated as "poor," "largely ineffective," "good," and in several recent incidents, "outstanding."

The truth lies somewhere in between, for it is no secret that there are Swapo cadres whose tactics have reflected many years of excellent training. These are the men—the majority with as much as six years of training behind them—that seasoned soldiers in the operational area refer to as Swapo's "A Team," in much the same way as players would be graded into various teams at school.

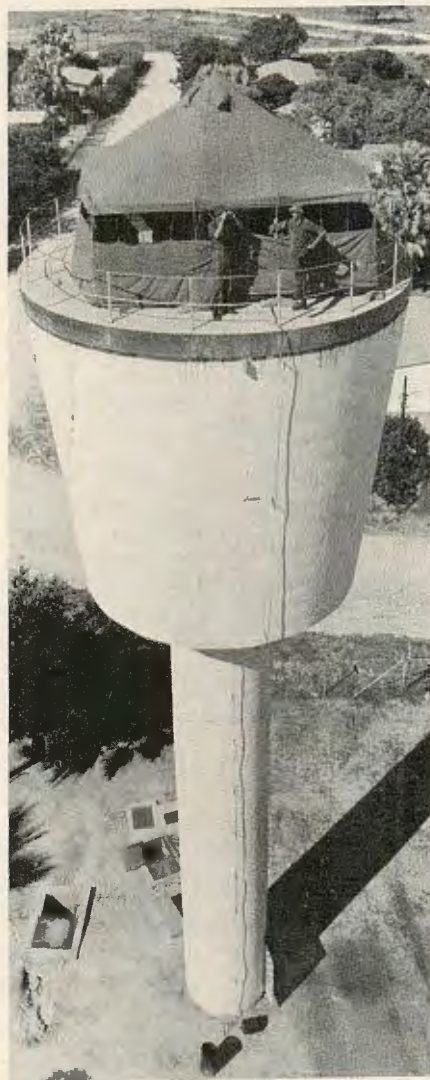
Further down the scale there is a "B Team" and if someone were to make a serious study of the subject there would undoubtedly be others.

Judged according to my own experience of other guerrilla wars in Southern Africa, I would rate Swapo higher than the majority of forces facing the Rhodesian Army; more aggressive, better disciplined and, broadly speaking, having a more realistic appreciation of weapons' capability. There is also no comparison between Swapo and any of the liberation forces opposed to Portuguese rule in either Angola or Mozambique.

Unquestionably, Swapo's "A Team" is regarded as having an excellent leadership. While there are not too many of them, the actions in which they have participated have reflected a sound understanding of all the essentials of unconventional warfare, including the psychological aspect.

These troops are able to operate under the most difficult conditions; one unit of about a dozen men which found itself in trouble some months ago managed to cover 310 kilometers in seven days. Rests were brief and food was minimal. One member of this party was later killed by security forces and was found to have nothing in his stomach except beer; indications were that he and his friends had eaten nothing during the previous 24-hour period.

Tracking this group was a nightmare for the forces following in their path.



South African Army observation post on top of Ovamboland water tower. Terrain on Angola-SW African border is flat, so every man-made high point has become observation post.

Time and again, the insurgents were able to resort to the most sophisticated anti-tracking measures, which included walking on hands and feet in soft sand for more than two kilometers—a ploy which leaves no recognizable tracks; the average person does well if he can manage 200 meters of that kind of activity.

Much use is also made of locals in helping to eradicate tracks when it is known that security forces are near.

A herd of goats or cattle will be driven across a spoor to obliterate it, or young children will be ordered to drag branches over a fresh spoor. Back-to-front walking is old hat, but this is not as effective as it used to be since the security forces tend to follow up in both directions of any track that is found.

Another factor weighs heavily in the movement's favor.

Swapo's bush craft is of the best yet seen in any guerrilla war on this continent. For instance, they are able to use a bow and arrow when they need food and do not wish to attract the attention of any nearby patrol. Conversely their musketry is poor. There have been several attacks on security force positions where several thousand rounds of ammunition (much of it tracer, as is Swapo's tendency) have been expended for perhaps two or three hits.

In one attack on a civilian car last year, almost a thousand cases were afterwards found alongside the road by security forces. Only three bullets hit the vehicle; no one was killed or injured, although Swapo did wound one of its own men in the onslaught and he was later killed by his colleagues.

Much of Swapo's training today takes place in Angola. A side effect of this is the organization's predilection in recent months for the Cuban olive-green uniform and bush cap. Other training bases have been sited in Zambia, Tanzania, and in several Iron Curtain countries.

Unlike several other terrorist organizations, the Swapo hierarchy is firmly ensconced within the Soviet camp. China is regarded as anathema and Swapo leaders say so.

Certainly the biggest problem facing authorities in northern South West Africa is that terrorist activity is usually at its worst where the population is thickest. Another is the fact that the Ovambo nation of more than 400,000 souls is not a single nation, as is commonly supposed, but a conglomerate of fiercely proud and individualistic tribes—seven in all.

The largest of these tribes, numbering about 80,000 people, is the Kwanyama whose major distinction is the fact that



a similar number of its people live in permanent exile on the other side of the Angolan border.

While the Kwanyamas regard themselves as superior to all other Ovambo peoples, they are even more arrogant when it comes to dealings with other South West African groups. An Ovambo in the ordinary course of events will not even speak to a Kavango.

It is because the Kwanyamas (the Angolan spelling is Cuanyamas) are split across a common frontier that much of the present-day problems have originated; a nation whose loyalties were torn down the middle in the crazy European scramble for Africa in the 19th century. Agreement between Britain and Portugal as to the border between the two Colonial territories was only reached after World War I.

It was then that the division of the traditional homeland of the Kwanyama tribe along an arbitrary line of latitude was institutionalized. Father and son, brother and sister found themselves living in different countries, being administered by separate laws and two totally different colonial concepts.

So it continued for many years. The Kwanyamas accepted the peculiar whims of their respective white governments. For the Portuguese the southern Angolan border was a remote spot; they called it "the end of the world." For the South Africans, the northern South West Af-

Mounted patrol moving through one-kilometer-wide "no-man's land" adjoining Angola border. Man second from right carries M-79 Grenade Launcher (U.S.), rest have FN rifles, several of which have pre-mounted rifle grenades for immediate use.

rican border was the extremity of an area it was administrating under a League of Nations mandate.

With the outbreak of a guerrilla war in Angola in 1961, conditions changed almost overnight. Border controls tightened—Portugal eager to seal off any inflow of support and South Africa wanting to prevent revolution lapping over into its territory. For the Kwanyamas the frontier had become a reality.

But the Kwanyamas gradually became entangled in the Angolan struggle. If they supported the liberation movements, they fell foul of the Portuguese security forces. If they supported the administering power, they became traitors to the revolution.

Attempts at neutrality earned these proud tribespeople the suspicion and contempt of both. Ironically, the same situation holds for South West Africa today.

Then came a Portuguese defeat and those Kwanyamas living north of the border argued that if it could be done once, it could be achieved a second time. Why not!

Ovambo cadres were sent from Angola into northern South West Africa on missions of intrigue to persuade their cousins that the time for revolution had arrived. So it had; those who were not

interested in identifying themselves with a military struggle were warned that if they were not killed, their wives and children would be. Similar threats were made about property.

And the Ovambos, being thoroughly family oriented, took notes. Gradually the revolution gathered strength, buttressed by regular kidnappings of schoolchildren, for by now Swapo cadre leaders were espousing the view that "today's children are tomorrow's leaders": a Marxist cliché which makes good sense in Africa.

But the revolutionaries have not had it all their way.

According to military authorities in Oshikati, a fair proportion of the Ovambo community has become more than disgruntled with the demands made upon them by terrorist groups passing through.

Each group, it is argued, has to be fed. And because the average Swapo farmer grows only enough for himself and his family, someone must go hungry for several months of the year if terrorist requisitions are too heavy. They usually are.

For this reason, it is maintained that of the entire Ovambo nation in northern South West Africa about 20 percent of the population are declaredly pro-Swapo. A similar number are anti. It's the 60 percent in the middle that have not yet committed themselves to the outcome.

It's largely about them that the current phase of hostilities is centered.

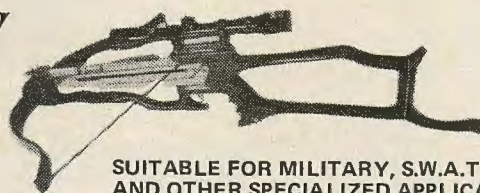
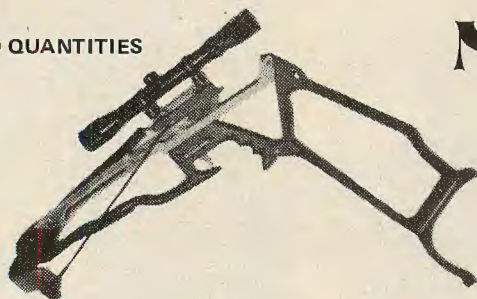


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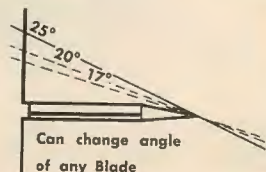
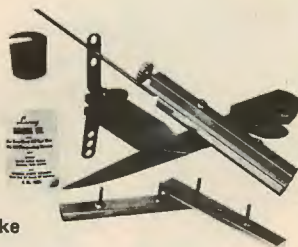
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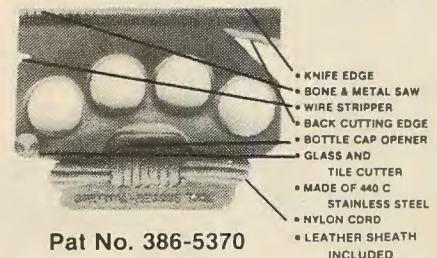
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# PLO Operations In Lebanon

## Inside Al Fatah

by Terry Edwards

*Terry Edwards joined the Canadian militia when he was 15 years old, eventually training with Recon and Infantry units before being honorably discharged at the age of 22. He continued his interest in military professionalism, becoming involved in certain fields and eventually writing A Mercenary's Manual, Parts I & II, based on his personal experiences and those of acquaintances in the business. Now working full-time at the age of 26 as a journalist, Edwards decided to go to Lebanon to increase his knowledge of warfare. Having no contacts with any of the forces fighting in the Middle East, he simply flew to Beirut and made contact with the military and paramilitary personnel he met. Asking to be taken to their headquarters, where he identified*

*himself as a freelance journalist, he was able to meet the right people and go into the field, experiencing the story that follows. He currently writes in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.*

South Lebanon, 1977—The echoes of gunfire and grenades faded into the hills and a new sound took over. Elton John's "Island Girl" was blaring from the bunker nearby, still hidden in a cloud of smoke and dust. A few yards away several soldiers helped a wounded comrade from the rubble. His leg had been laid open and his back peppered by a grenade. For him help was miles away, probably the lone doctor still in the Palestinian stronghold of Nabatiye. What

the doctor can't handle he sends to Sidon in the Palestinian Red Crescent ambulance.

The soldier may lose the leg, but if he lives he's better off than the estimated 50,000 Lebanese who have died since the bloody civil war flared in 1975. A coalition of Rightists and Christians locked horns with an alliance of Lebanese Moslems, Leftists, and Palestinians. It has not been a war of lines and strategy, but one pitting block against block and

This 12.7mm DSHK 38 guards approach to Fatah position in stone house. Reliable and hard-hitting, the Daska and .50 cal. Browning are much in demand.



Young Palestinian fits Belgian-made anti-tank grenade onto launcher of FN FAL 7.62mm rifle. In background are belts of 12.7mm ammo. Sturdy stone houses and cave shelter small bands of many factions in southern Lebanon.

village against village. The Rightist coalition can claim more tactical victories but the war has really decided very little. If anything, it has only created new hatreds and vendettas to ensure further bloodletting.

Syria finally took the initiative to end the war a year later. After many months and lives lost, they could claim to have stopped most of the fighting. Sniping and isolated raids will probably go on for years. In the south, Syria and her Arab League allies ran into a problem. Israel refused to allow Syrians into that part of Lebanon near the Israeli border. So the Syrians stopped short, resulting in a strip of no-man's land from six to 20 miles wide. Into this pressure-cooker area already racked by years of guerrilla and reprisal raids between Palestinian fighters and Israel, poured thousands of combatants to continue the fighting.

The variety of forces is bewildering. Dozens and dozens of more-or-less independent bands and several large, powerful factions roam in anarchy. The fighting, except for major actions, seldom follows any logic; it just starts up anytime, anywhere, ranging from squad-size ambushes and raids to slog-it-out street battles and occasional clashes with Israeli troops and armor who push into the area to aid their Rightist allies.

There are perhaps as many as 20,000 fighters of all sides in the tiny zone and far more weapons than people to use them. Estimates place the number of small arms now in Lebanon as exceeding the population of the country. In the south the ratio is higher still. One band of a dozen men had enough arms to equip 60 more. The concentration of forces, the diversity of groups, and the lack of lines makes the whole zone a battle area. Some areas, particularly around the larger towns, are constant combat zones, but this does not mean the rest are at peace. Today's rest area may be tonight's battlefield. Snipers plink at any target they find inspiring and the result is usually another exchange of automatic fire building up, then dying, as one side or the other tires of the game or runs low on ammo. Then at night the action really gets going, sometimes lit by flares, but more often in fog and blackness.

Rightist friends arranged for me to do some research with their forces in the south. I duly dragged my kit into the Beirut Falangist headquarters and was told I couldn't go. The reason given was that the Falangist columns were not being allowed south by the Syrian peacekeepers. The real reason was more likely



the covert presence of Israeli troops and Israel's desire to keep a low profile by allowing no foreign witnesses. Although he could give me no official help, the Falangist officer suggested I head down anyway and go along with whatever force I ran into first. He cautioned me on a few points and pointed me to a local bar. A few dollars changed hands and I had a ride south the next day at dawn.

My driver and his friend had their homes in the south, and as locals and non-combatants often travelled the area freely, although such outings were not something they looked forward to. We followed the coast road, passing through Syrian and Palestinian checkpoints—aided considerably by my Canadian passport. The nation's drivers take full advantage of the anarchy to prove their driving abilities. It's a tossup whether the traffic or the shooting offers the greatest dangers.

South of Sidon, we turned inland. At the T-junction a lone six-wheel Soviet-built BTR-152 APC sat in a shallow pit. A bored crewman warned of heavy fighting ahead. We asked if more Syrians were up the road. He shook his head and turned away as we drove on.

The road rose from the shore and a few miles along hung on the hillsides with magnificent views of red and brown stony hills and green valleys below. We were alone on the road except for two Red Crescent ambulances that wailed past ahead of us and a tiny overloaded car carrying another refugee family to the safety of the north. Our first stop was to be the town of Nabatiye.

Once home to 40,000 people, the town is now almost deserted by civilians and left to the troops of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its allies. Only a handful of the sick, the old and tired hang on to keep the fighters company. The Syrian crewman's warning proved groundless as we rolled in under the eyes of lookouts.

Nabatiye lies north of the Litani river and as such should be occupied by Syrians. But, because of the river's course, or plain common sense, the Syrians have elected to stay out. To the

east of Nabatiye is the Christian town of Marjayoun three miles away. Between the town runs the easily crossed Litani river. To the southeast the Israeli border juts north about eight miles away. We pulled over to speak with a grenade-laden PLO trooper on the main drag. He told us the road ahead was blocked with smashed vehicles and an on-again, off-again running battle. The driver switched to Plan B and wheeled up a side street. He halted by a low wall and pointed me into the yard beyond before blasting off on an errand of his own.

In the yard a dozen men sat on bunks arranged in a horseshoe. Gray blankets held aloft on poles sheltered them from the sun and the prying cameras of Israeli spotter planes. They continued to talk as I approached. Two troopers moved over to make room for me to sit down. I examined one of a dozen Energa grenades stashed under a bunk as the troops wound up their conference. Finally, the leader got up from the head of the horseshoe and introduced himself with an enthusiastic handshake. His men swarmed around, shaking hands and offering American cigarettes, part of the booty from the clearing out of the port of Beirut.

Rejection Front trooper on the right is foreign volunteer; holds Rumanian copy of AK-47. Author, left, holds early model Soviet RPD light machinegun with 50 round non-disintegrating belt.





"Come," said the boss. "We must go inside now; if the planes spot us it will be bad."

Inside the two-room house we again sat on bunks as a small Arab boy served tea to the group. No one drank. Most of my dealings with Arabs to this point had been with the westernized Christians of the Rightist forces, and I wondered if some protocol were involved here over the tea. Were they waiting for the leader to drink first, or the guest? I took a drink and felt the blazing liquid dissolve my tongue.

"Why don't you let it cool?" asked the commander. I told him what I was thinking. He got a chuckle out of this and it broke the ice well, if somewhat painfully.

This leader spoke excellent English. A Christian, he had joined the Moslem-Leftist-Palestinian alliance out of political conviction. Before the war he was an officer in the now-disbanded Lebanese army. He was in his mid-30s and had been educated in Europe and California.

Most of his band used AK-47s and their variations, but he preferred the weapon he had trained on, the FN FAL, for "the longer ranges encountered in the south. In Beirut the AK is very good because it is short and handy and won't jam up from the dust, but here the shots are longer and only a full-size rifle cartridge can really be effective." He examined my passport and SOF press

This slightly dinged Land Rover belongs to Falangist forces and carries 12.7mm Daska HMG. Light trucks and similar vehicles mounting medium or heavy machine guns are common to all factions.

card, returned them and warned me not to display the SOF card in the area. And he asked what I was doing there.

I told him my purposes were multi-fold, to brush up on their tactics, weapons and techniques, and to learn about the Fatah, get to know them and how they work. To do this I would like to spend some time with them at the front.

"You're already here," he said, then agreed to let me hang around as long as I liked.

Nabatiye is a PLO town, fairly large and well stocked with troops and weapons. As such it is hardly likely to fall to an assault, but is subjected to bi-nightly artillery shellings and frequent hard-hitting infiltration raids. This band had lost two men the week before to a shell landing a few yards from the stone house. Their picture hung on the wall next to the ever-present posters and painted slogans.

The area we were in was inhabited by dozens of factions and bands. Most answered to PLO leadership more or less directly, but local leaders had far more autonomy than any western army

officer ever dreams of. Many bands were wholly independent of allies and only coordinated their activities when they had to. And there had been friction within the Moslem - Leftist - Palestinian alliance and the PLO itself.

For starters, the PLO is made up of three large factions and a number of lesser groups and "suicide squads." Large factions and bands have broken completely with the PLO leadership and fire fights between them and PLO are not unknown. The "Rejection Front" is always on a shaky footing with PLO. These men believe the PLO has gone soft and is prepared to negotiate with Israel. A few bands are neither Lebanese nor Palestinian. Many Iraqis and Libyans have come to help in the fighting and some work in close groups. Add to this melting pot traditional rivalries of local leaders and the frictions of national origins, political bent, etc., and you can see the degree of confusion that reigns. When you squeeze all of this into a few square miles of lawless territory, the situation is chaotic.

Most of the action was centered on Marjayoun. The town had been under siege for weeks. Fortunately for its Christian inhabitants, Israel had taken an active role in the region, supplying arms, supplies, and training to their Falangist allies. Israel had opened the border nearby at a spot called the "Good Fence," and through this point passed

Falangist wounded for treatment inside Israel. Many villagers from nearby Christian towns shopped and worked there as well, and Israeli troops and armor operated frequently inside Lebanon to take the pressure off their allies. At this time their presence was one of those open secrets common in today's politics. In addition, Israeli spotter planes and artillery ranged over the zone to provide further support.

While the Right enjoyed this support, the Left had the manpower advantage. Leftist forces in the south were estimated at about 10,000 men. Rightist forces throughout Lebanon were given as about 30,000, but not all were in the south by a long shot. The Syrian and Arab League peacekeepers prevented large scale reinforcement to either side.

Down the street from the Fatah band's HQ was a PLO street office/position. Someone unwisely suggested I meet the regional PLO commander. The position had been raked with Falangist MGs earlier in the morning and the troops were still a bit edgy. Inside I was offered a seat and a cigarette. I declined the Marlboro in favor of the Rothman's I was carrying. This was a mistake. Hoping to recover, I offered the trooper a Rothman. He refused but again held out the Marlboros. I accepted and the atmosphere instantly improved.

A half hour later, along with five PLO troopers and two Fatah, I got into a Land Rover and we headed for the regional HQ—Yes, that is correct; eight people and no less than 10 guns in a Land Rover! The sprawling green building sat on a hillside facing south and looked more like a resort than a military HQ. Troops and officers under the vine canopy all smiled and saluted as we entered the imposing portals. Inside, the sun-splashed resort image crumbled in a wall-to-wall sea of weapons, bunks, troops, and equipment. Straight ahead was the commander's office. Tea was served.

The man was stocky, middle-aged, and looked every bit the life-long veteran he was. He examined my passport minutely before asking what I was doing there.

"I'm a freelance writer looking for a story."

"Do you have a pass?"

"No."

"Then you must leave this area at once." He told me I could get a pass in Beirut. End of interview. Polite but firm.

During battle for Beirut, Christian area was successfully blockaded by Palestinian forces from Tal-Al-Zaatar stronghold. This homemade armored vehicle was once 3/4-ton Dodge truck; was produced in Falangist workshop and helped break blockade by bringing in supplies from port north of town.

Staying in Nabatiye after this would have been less than bright, so I could not return to the first group. After more arguing and cajoling, and a few more bucks, I convinced a Lebanese to introduce me into a band whose ties with the PLO leadership were less than strong. In a small hamlet the introduction was made. It went surprisingly smoothly and my request to stay was granted.

One reason for my easy welcome was the assortment of nationalities in the Fatah band. It was an international group of volunteers. The leader was Lebanese but his men were from Iraq, Libya, and Algeria, among others. There were also a few Lebanese and Palestinians. Like most bands this one was 100 percent equipped with Soviet-bloc gear. Their hillside HQ contained far more weapons than the force could ever use.

The assortment of weapons would make a gun collector weep. Every AK variation imaginable was in this house: East German, Russian, Hungarian, fixed and folding stocks, from relic shape to brand new. LMGs, MMGs, and HMGs, gathered dust in the rafters and loaded RPGs leaned in every corner. Uniforms for the men were optional. Some had olive-drab head to toe, while others preferred jeans and civilian shirts. Most of the troops were teenagers. At 25, the leader and I were the old men of the



group. All were friendly, and a visitor, particularly a North American, was unique. Security on their position fell apart as they spent the afternoon showing off their weapons and expertise in a mixture of gestures, English, Arabic, and French.

After sunset the heat of day went quickly and it got surprisingly cool. I pulled on my Israeli paratroop jacket. That raised a few eyebrows. We moved in loose file down the hillside, keeping close to one of the low stone walls that serve here as fences. The fog began to thicken after dusk, and now at 11 o'clock it lay below in a solid mass. We halted just short of it, so we could still see, and took up positions. Below us other bands were already in place and above us still more would hopefully cover the flanks and rear.

Just after midnight a small raiding party passed through. Israeli artillery was warming up by shelling the besiegers around Marjayoun. A shell passed overhead, cleared the side of the hill, and crashed into the valley or slope behind us. For awhile it was quiet, then the fog below glowed green with a flare, and a stream of ricocheting tracers tumbled up above us. Down the line two AKs opened up into the mist and everyone tensed for an attack. It didn't come.

It was still dark when another firefight broke out to the west of us. The commander redeployed his men for an all-around defense and again we waited while the fighting tapered off. Finally, as dawn approached, the force redeployed again—as an ambush lower in the valley to catch any raiding parties of the other side passing by. There were none and we returned to the hillside house in daylight.

Getting along with the troops is an easy enough job, provided you take care what you say. Names like "Israel" were definitely not welcome. "Palestine" worked much better. When we met other groups I just kept my mouth shut. The presence of a North American disturbed some of the other bands. One leader was particularly put off and argued long and loudly with the commander of the band I was with. When we parted, both bands had their AKs pointing half menacingly at each other.

No doubt I figured largely in the argument, but the leader would only say, "We must leave now. If we stay something bad would happen here."

Language problems made communication difficult, but members of the bands went to considerable lengths to pass on their knowledge. I sometimes wondered how much of the activity was put on for the visitor and how much was regular routine.

The second band I was with occupied two or three positions. One was a small, well battered building in a nearly leveled hamlet. We entered the house through a covered hole in the back wall. Inside

were a few bunks, stocks of ammo and kit, and three fighters. A Daska heavy machine gun pointed out the open front. Two of the men kept watch and the third sat on the floor taping nails around rifle grenades for an anti-personnel effect. A ruin nearby housed another group. Their generator or battery-powered radio was turned to a rock station—Israeli, I was told.

Fifty yards away there was a tremendous crash, a cloud of dust, chips of stone and brick flew up. The sounds of falling debris were killed by the automatic fire that spewed out immediately afterward. Someone was attacking the band in the nearby ruined house. It had been rebuilt into a bunker-like position and return fire was already going out at the fleeing targets. An instant later, all weapons from our building were in action as well. Outside someone touched off an RPG. The heavy grenade smoked out, far too high, and exploded harmlessly in a field. Next to me the Daska had been manned by one of the troops. He was firing in short bursts but even so the high, anti-aircraft tripod wasn't holding up well. The gun rocked back and threatened to come over with a crash. I shifted over a few feet to avoid the possibility of being crushed by it and immediately branded my hand on a hot RPD case.

The fact that our building was occupied must have thrown the attackers off. After about five minutes of mutual small arms spraying they pulled back, launching a cluster of rifle grenades as they went. One burst in the loose cover over a nearby shelter and ripped into the man inside. The only other casualties were a few cuts and bruises.

In less than two weeks, I'd dropped 10 pounds and it had gotten to the point I was forgetting as much as I was picking up. Keeping a tactical notebook or notes of any kind would have been risky so I had to rely on memory.

When I told the group's leader it was time for me to go, he asked me to stay for the afternoon. Since I needed him to get out, I consented.

It was early afternoon, windless and hot. Under cover of low scrub and rocks we watched the listless village below. We were further north now, close to Syrian lines but still inside PLO territory. The village appeared to have seen little if any fighting. Everything looked peaceful but the commander sent a man in to check anyway. He walked down unarmed, entered a house on the outskirts, and then stepped out and waved us down.

I had no idea what the purpose of the foray was. The village people were friendly enough and a few were keeping watch on the town's approaches for us. We left the street and climbed a few steps to a covered patio. The mission became clear: we'd come for lunch.

The restaurant owner knew most of the Fatah men and rushed about laying on bowls of labna and bottles of beer and wine. Heaping platters of shish-ka-bobbed lamb arrived with salads and more beer and wine. Sauces, grapes, olives, nuts, and more kept coming as fast as we could put it away. And after eating in the field, that's fast. A juke-box wailed out Arab pop tunes and Western rock. Finally, thick Turkish coffee came to top the meal off, with an ample supply of beer for the afternoon. People from the town were dropping in to see their friends and relatives in the band. Little kids with toy guns were assaulting the gathering through the hedge while some of us tried to breathe some life into the ancient pinball machine.

Gorged on the food, we moved into a patch of grass and spent a few hours swilling beer and soaking in the sun. In late afternoon, after many solemn handshakes and goodbyes, we parted. By dark I was back in Beirut, drinking beer with guys on the other side.

In retrospect, I would advise other writers to get the PLO pass in Beirut. My lack of "legal" status in Fatahland, as the area is sometimes called, restricted my contacts to smaller, more radical bands. Maps and translators were not to be had. The list of problems goes on to include extreme heat, strange food, and the uncomfortable knowledge that your passport is worth considerably more than your life to many people. My \$50 camera also got its share of bad reception, inspiring scowls and bad words wherever I hauled it out. Only one leader allowed pictures, when I told him that without proof of presence my story would be useless. He insisted on handling it personally, specifying who and what could be photographed; and this only because I took advantage of a brief good mood. With a PLO pass there are seldom such problems.

I had learned a great deal, however, about tactics, weapons and battle techniques of these smaller bands. Small arms in use included all the post-war Soviet-bloc weapons and an assortment of others. M-16s from Israel and Arab states are quite popular with both sides. It's a shock to run into an entire PLO unit armed with American equipment!

For anti-tank work, the Russian RPG-7 is preferred over the LAW. The RPG can punch a hole through a foot of armor plate and knock down any wall that gets in its way. Unfortunately, it does leave a considerable signature. On light vehicles the 12.7mm Daska or the Browning .50-cal. are stock additions.

Handguns are seldom used in combat and submachine guns are also noticeably absent. Folding stock AK rifles seem to have taken over both roles, although there are always a few handguns kicking around to tuck in your belt for a short

Continued on page 81

# L-Tronic Night Sight

by Jerry Ahern

The first time I saw the L-Tronic Night Sight, I was frankly amazed. A good friend, much involved in the practical and theoretical aspects of law enforcement, had one of the early installations on his 5½-inch, blue S&W Model 27, equipped with Fuzzy Ferant stocks. I remember it to this day. We stepped into a windowless office and he took the N-Frame .357 from his pistol case and handed it to me. We shut off the lights and—in total darkness—greater than most street situations—the front and rear sight lighted like a Christmas Tree. I turned the muzzle towards me, having already cleared and checked the weapon, and from the business end I could see nothing. Again, looking down the rib, the rear sight was illuminated in a greenish yellow light, while the front sight was illuminated in red.

The lights back on, I inspected the pistol. Looking carefully, I could see the diodes—similar to those on pocket calculators—which served to illuminate the sights. I knew, logically, since I'd been told the system ran off a battery in the off-gunhand grip plate, there had to be wires running down the raised rib to the front sight. I knew they were there, but even putting on my glasses, I couldn't see them.

Not long after that, I got a super deal on a six-inch Model 19 from a good dealer friend. Immediately, I shipped the gun to Cap Cresap (21422 Rosedell, Saugus, California 91350), requesting the installation. The interesting thing about Cap Cresap is that my installation was much more advanced than the one on my friend's Model 27. If you get an installation, after reading this, yours will be more advanced than the one done on my Model 19.

It appears that Cresap has finally hit on close-to-perfect, so not so many changes should be anticipated in the future. Not being the wizard Cresap is, let me explain my installation, then the changes he has made. When the Model 19 came back, it seemed almost unaltered. Looking carefully, a greenish diode was epoxied in a small undercut beneath the rear sight. In the rear face of the front sight, there was a red diode. Framing the square notch on the rear sight was a yellow outline, immensely useful for daytime shooting as well. I could not detect the wires connecting front and rear sights that logic told me ran along the serrated rib. I was able, when the light hit it just right, to detect the wire leading into the rear diode.

To work the sight, one simply grips the gun normally. The second finger of the gunhand, when in contact with the off-gunhand grip plate—since I am right handed, the left grip plate—activates a pressure sensitive switch cut into the grip panel. This makes contact with wiring under the grip panel, the juice coming from a rechargeable Nicad cell. Thus, the sights are illuminated.

Since the wires are in the grip plate, should a malfunction occur, the gun is still a fully operable shooting iron. The sighting system in no way affects operation of the gun. When the battery runs down, it can simply be recharged by use of a battery eliminator wall plug or a nine-volt transistor battery. One eight-hour charge lasts up to six months. Up to six hours of continuous use can be had on one charging. If necessary, using the battery powered charger, the gun can be fired while charging.

You may think that here is the flaw, some bulky receptacle for charging. But not with Cresap's genius. The receptacle is inconspicuously incorporated into the

base of the grips where the wood meets, measuring about a quarter-inch in length. You have to look closely to see it.

Cresap has had this installation in use with no problems by active duty police officers under all weather conditions for a decade. The only things which can make the installation inoperable are salt water and re-bluing, although numerous guns with the installation have been hot blued with no ill effects.

The installation, at the time my Model 19 was done, was available only for Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers with a raised or ventilated rib, as well as the Ruger Security Six. Cresap was fully capable of installing a front illuminating diode on AR-15 and M-16 rifles. But now, though Cresap will still make an installation like the one on my M-19, all that is really out of date.

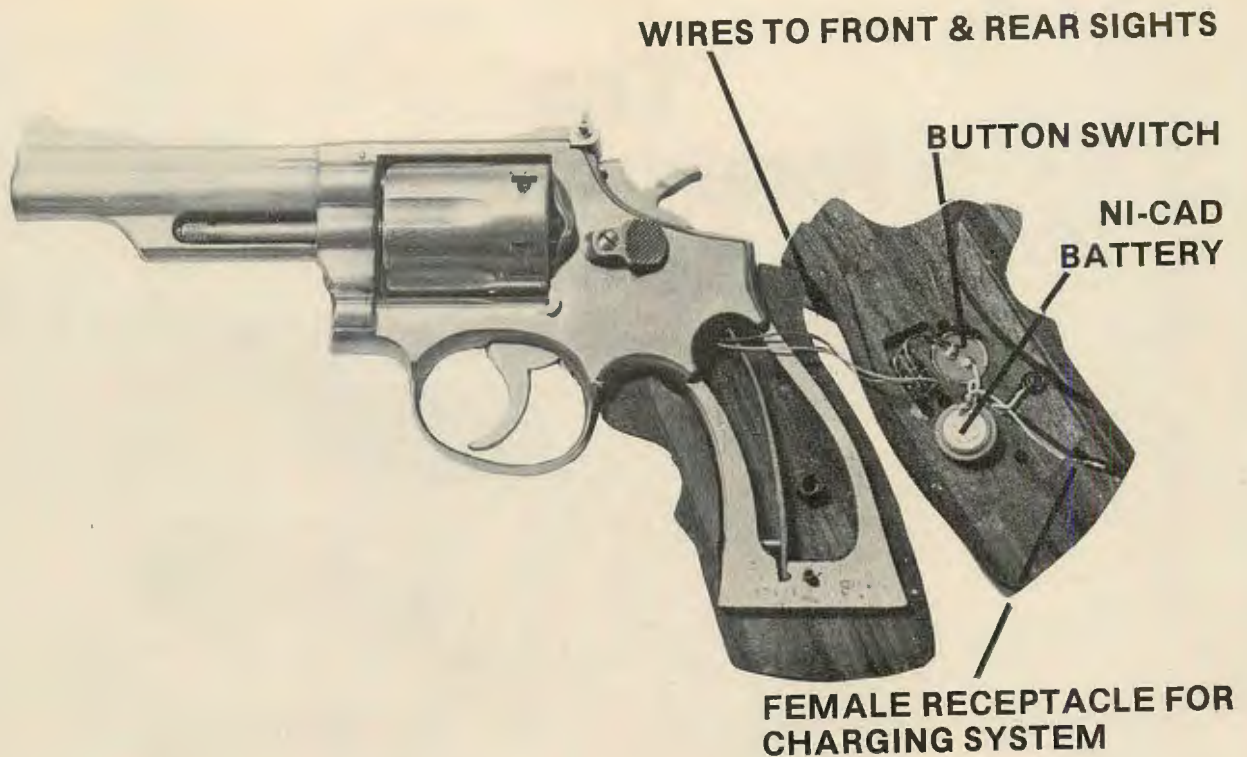
No more battery chargers. He uses replaceable hearing aid batteries, the kind you can buy in any drug store. He uses less epoxy and has a cleaner, less noticeable installation. When Cresap told me that, I laughed, since making the installation cleaner or less noticeable than it already was seemed impossible. He installs the system on AR-15 and M-16 rifles when requested, also has the capability to use it on police riot shotguns. And, as you'll see in N. E. MacDougald's accompanying text, he has perfected the L-Tronic Night Sight for semiautomatic pistols like the .45 auto. Using printed circuits instead of wires, replaceable batteries instead of a recharger, the system is as close to perfect as I can envision, which doubtlessly means Cresap will think of a way of improving it.

The job is just as clean and reliable on blue or nickel finish guns, also works and looks perfect with stainless guns like the S&W M-66. Front-sight-only installations can be done on guns like the S&W Chiefs and similar fixed-sight revolvers.

The L-Tronic Night Sight has been tested and approved by L.A.P.D., evaluated and recommended by Phoenix P.D., rated as "... the best low-light-level setup I've ever seen," by George Nonte, the veritable walking Britannica of firearms knowledge, tested by the U.S. Secret Service and California Highway Patrol and numerous others. Cost is roughly half the price of a good quality handgun. For more information, contact Cap Cresap. If the mails are too slow for you, call him at 805-259-1162. It's one of the few things these days that is much better than words can describe.



Although L-Tronic sights are unnoticeable in daylight, they can hardly be missed in darkness.



## L-Tronic Night Sight Technological Toy?

by N.E. MacDougald

Point and pull is a fine method of pollution abatement if you're using a sawed-off. But if visibility is poor and you're armed with a handgun, you probably can't see your sights. Moreover, the flash from a hasty shot might give away your position. Consider the following scenario:

It's 3 a.m.—you hear a noise downstairs. Cautiously, you get out of bed. Your heart quickens. Gun in hand, you inch down the carpeted steps. You hear another noise. You're wide awake as you enter the living room. A bright moon lets you see the silhouette of an armed man moving between you and the window. You point your weapon and discover that although the intruder is visible, your sights are not. What do you do?

There are several possibilities. You could turn on the lights, but this puts you and your attacker on equal ground. You could use a flashlight, but again, the beam might give away your position and does nothing to illuminate your sights. A fragmentation grenade would do the job nicely, but it's unlikely you'd be willing to destroy your home to dispatch a common criminal.

Cap Cresap of Saugus, California, has found a solution. He calls his invention the L-Tronic sight light. I have owned an L-Tronic installed on a Model 66 Smith for over a year now. Although I haven't had occasion to use it socially, I've practiced with it many times and I

found it did, as promised, increase my accuracy in low light. But it won't make a marksman out of a novice, nor will it enable a person to hit targets in total darkness. Obviously, you must have enough light to see your target.

L-Tronic is rugged solid state. Once installed, it's barely visible—even when you know what you're looking for. The batteries in the grips power tiny light-emitting diodes (LEDs) carefully cut into the front and rear sights by a precise drilling and milling process. The system becomes activated by depressing a small button in the grip. Nothing to think about, just grab your piece in a business grip and the system is on. Holster it, and the system is off.

However, Cresap had sense enough to make the sight lights themselves visible only to the user. The tiny red and yellow LEDs cannot be seen from the sides nor from the front. But what if the system fails just when you need it most? What if the batteries run down? You're still in no worse shape than before. You've got an alert mind and a ready weapon—the only real essentials. L-Tronic is not a crutch for the helpless; it's a tool for the prepared.

An L-Tronic system for the venerable .45 auto is in the works and should be available soon. Police price for fixed sights is about \$100, for adjustable sights about \$125.

Police price for L-Tronic installed on S&W revolvers is about \$65, while Colt or Ruger wheelguns run about \$75. The AR-15 and Ruger Mini 14 front sights (only) can be fitted out for about \$75.

New smaller LEDs will be used in future installations. Printed circuit boards will replace wired units. The user will be able to replace batteries (ni-cad or mercury) in the field.

*Ed. Note: Several law enforcement agencies have tested and approved the L-Tronic. According to Phoenix PD reports, "(L-Tronic) improved probability of a hit in the dark by 400%." The LAPD approved L-Tronic for personal and duty weapons in 1974. And the Secret Service reports, "At night our normal pattern is the size of a dinner plate. With the L-Tronic sight we can cover it with a tea cup."*

*We asked weapons expert George Nonte what he thought of L-Tronic, and he replied, "Of those night-sight systems available, I consider L-Tronic the most practical and useful because it doesn't increase the weapon's weight or bulk."*

For more info write:

Cap Cresap  
21422 Rosedell, Dept. SF  
Saugus, CA 91350

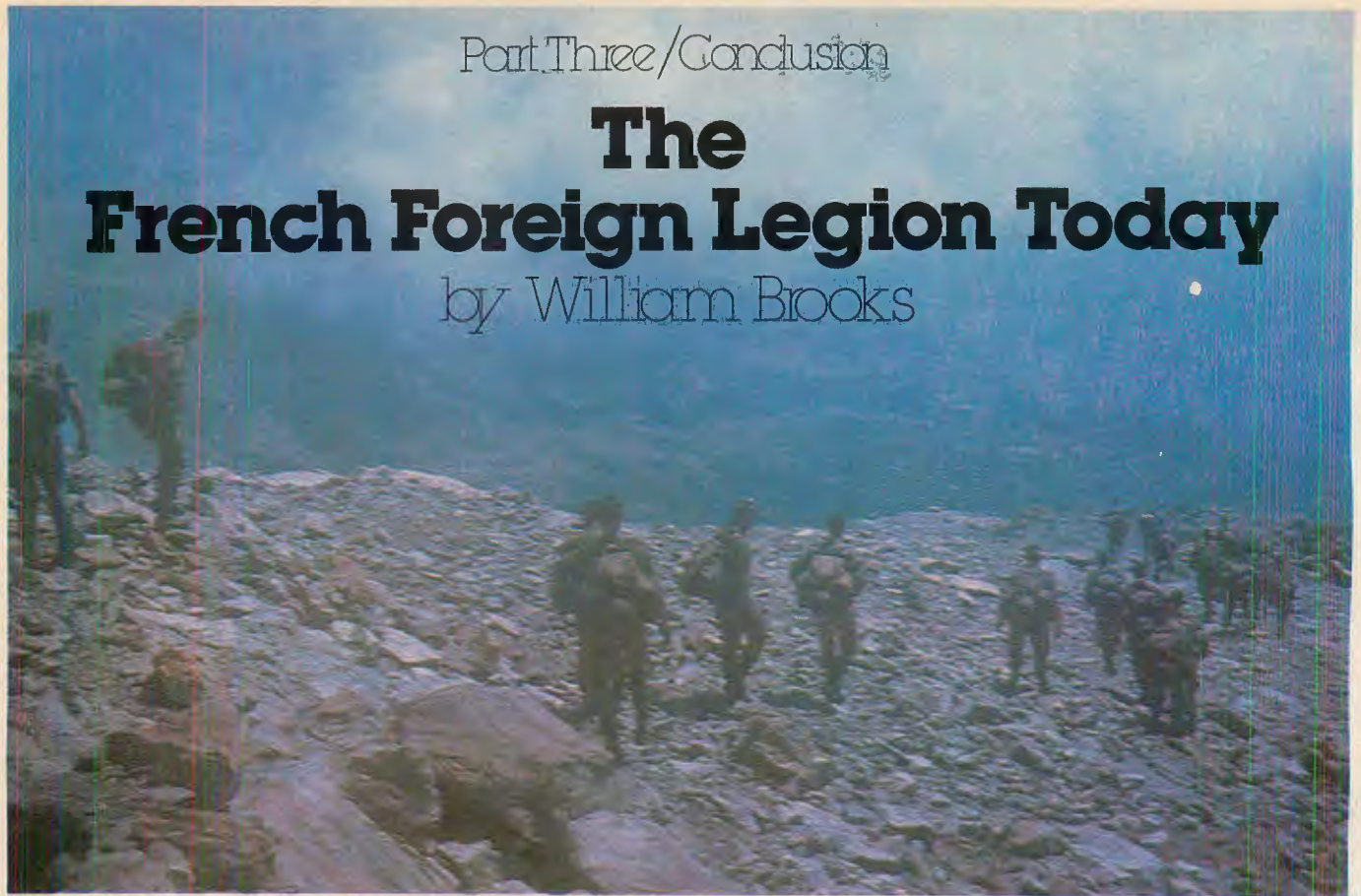
1. Retail prices for all installations are approximately 20% more than police prices.





# The French Foreign Legion Today

by William Brooks



In part I, Bill Brooks, a veteran of the U.S. Army's 82nd Airborne Division, described his enlistment in the French Foreign Legion in 1972, where he took the required Legion alias of Walter Bride. Shipped to Aubagne, general headquarters of the Legion since 1963, Brooks and other engaged volunteers were interrogated as to their backgrounds and reasons for joining the Legion, a procedure designed to weed out major criminals.

Brooks was then shipped to Corsica for basic training. In contrast to the U.S. Army's emphasis on intensive basic training and personal and collective hygiene, he discovered that the Legion emphasized blind obedience, the French

Grunts and curses arise as AML90 armored car bogs down at Grand Barre, the Death Valley of Djibouti, where Legion "compagnies extérieures" (exterior companies), which guard Djibouti's borders, meet after regular "tours de bush" along country's frontiers. Mountains in background mark Ethiopian frontier.

Graduation march of Legionnaire trainees near mountaintop in central Corsica. Men are on their way from Boniface to Corte. Next step will be transfer to individual units.

were oblivious to personal and group hygiene, and basic training was extremely limited, emphasizing physical conditioning and marksmanship.

After basic, Brooks was sent to Stage Transmission School, one of three Legion specialty schools, where he trained as a communications operator. After completion of this training, Brooks was transferred to the African Republic of Djibouti in February 1973. He arrived in Camp Gabode, home of the Command Support and Services Company and the 2nd Work

Company, 13th Demi-Brigade, which supplied all needs for the exterior companies, the peace-keeping forces located in border forts along the frontiers of Somalia and Ethiopia.

In Part 2, Brunin, an Irish friend from Brooks' earlier days of Legion training, showed him around Camp Gabode and encouraged him to stay there rather than join an exterior company. Brunin admitted, however, that it was easier to desert from a frontier post and said that an American deserter should head for Ethiopia and the American Consulate there.

After a night on the town with Brunin, Brooks was assigned to the 4th Company at Holl-Holl, a post located by a bridge

"Eleve" (student) corporals take break from training at Legion NCO school at All-Sabieh, Djibouti. Tents in background are living quarters. Rock design is seven-flamed grenade, Legion's symbol. Men wear dress uniform with regimental badge on right pocket; fourragiere on left shoulder is unit citation.



on the Djibouti-Addis Ababa Railroad, where he became a light machine gunner in the 3rd Platoon.

Djibouti was Ethiopia's major link to the sea, since the port of Massawa-Assmara had been occupied by Eritrean rebels. At Holl-Holl, each platoon took turns guarding the railroad bridge and Legion Post, patrolling the frontier on foot or in trucks, and guarding La Barrage, a 10-foot high wire fence, barbed-wire emplacement, and mine field which surrounded the landward side of the town of Djibouti. Service on La Barrage also entailed guarding the seaward side of the city and setting water ambushes.

The only relief from the life of the "exterieur" was an occasional weekend furlough to town where on Saturday night the Legion declared war on everyone and ruled the alleys and the bars.

In March 1974, I was sent to Corporals' School at Ali-Sabieh, located about 40kms south of Holl-Holl. This course, which was supposed to train one to be the leader of a machine-gun team, turned out to be an eight-week endurance test. Plagued by open infections and racked with blood-soaked diarrhea, I and 35 other

Orange, France: 30 April, today's members of 1st REC (Legion 1st Cavalry Regiment) celebrate Camerone, Legion's most important holiday, by return to four-footed transport. Uniforms are replicas of those worn by desert Legionnaires in Damascus, Syria, during 1920s.



La Barrage near Djibouti's coast. Brooks and comrade display FLN (National Liberation Front) flag, captured by Legionnaires in 1963's heavy fighting in Algeria.

élève (student) corporals marched up and down every hill between Ali-Sabieh and Dikhil, led by a vain, five-foot, two-inch, 20-year-old egomaniac who called himself a lieutenant.

Because the lack of suitable drinking water had caused our bowel problems, we lived on hot Ethiopian Coca Cola, salt tablets, and paregoric. We never slept. Tactical problems gave way to busy work and all-night singing lessons. To compound things, I got lice and blood poi-

soning. Desertions were *en masse!* Three the third week, five the fourth, five the fifth. The two NCO instructors took our side and openly cursed our officer, whom we called *Le Petit Pedale* (the little faggot).

One of *Le Petit Pedale's* favorite games was called *tenué de compagne* (field uniform). This exercise in endurance usually took place late at night and ran until early morning. The platoon was assembled, and everyone given the order to change into another uniform, usually "walking out" or "parade dress," and report back to formation in three minutes. Once this was completed, another uniform was prescribed and so forth and so on for hours on end. The last one finished went on the *Pedale's* shit list and usually ended up pulling Sunday morning guard duty.

We usually ended the game by emptying our entire issue into two duffel bags, placing one in each hand; then, dressed in full battle gear, we would "run" to the top of Hill 904 where we would assemble and sing songs or bark at the moon until our throats were raw. Around three or four in the morning, we would be sent to our tents to prepare for morning inspection.

Putting up with this immature stupidity night after night and with our own physical misery brought us to the point of collapse. But we played these games as best we could, because one finished what he was assigned in the Legion or else he died trying. If you washed out, it was





better to desert because once you returned to your company you got *le pelote*<sup>1</sup> and 30 days' hard labor. So we changed uniforms, ran up and down Hill 904, dumped out our wall lockers, and barked at the moon!

In our filthy latrine, another generation of pot-bellied flies was breeding; across the border in Somalia, Russian troops were instructing Somali soldiers in night maneuvers and the use of infra-red firing devices. In Ethiopia, Marxist revolutionaries were plotting the overthrow of the Lion of Judah. In Ali-Sabieh the French Foreign Legion was barking at the moon!

Above: Legionnaire polishes AML-90, Panhard armored car, carrying 90mm cannon, after 1st REC (Legion 1st Cavalry Regiment) maneuvers in southern France. Although personal hygiene doesn't count, Legion discipline guarantees that equipment shines!

I always hated kid games—I hated kid games even when I was a kid.

Called on the carpet by the colonel, *Le Petit Pedale* was given 60 days' arrest, the course was terminated, and after six weeks and the loss of 30 pounds, Keller and I returned to Holl-Holl, my problems complicated by a tooth ache and an ugly discoloration in my blood-poisoned finger.

The logical procedure would have been to get in a jeep and go to the infirmary at Gabode, but things don't work so simply in the Legion. First you had to make the rounds of post, seeking out everyone in your chain of command and giving them a

Below: EBR (heavy reconnaissance) armored car of 1st REC, French Foreign Legion, moves out along road near Orange, France, in early 1970s. Vehicles, mounting 90mm cannons and having two central retractable wheels for use in rough terrain, were transferred to other French military units by 1975.



report on how things went at the school. Having not yet received my corporal stripes, this meant presenting myself to everyone from the Corporal *Chef de Chambre* (Room Chief) to the CO.

In order to save time, Keller and I went together, he helping me along as I stumbled trance-like around the fort, finding the desired person, snapping to attention, throwing back my head and screaming, "Elevé Corporal Bride, two years and two months' service, Platoon Cara, Company Kaye, returned successfully from Platoon CM1 *a vos ordres*, (at your orders) *Chef* (or *Mon Adjutant* or whatever)."

Afterwards Keller would do the same; then still standing erect, we would be

That was the best news I'd heard all month. I walked back to my room and began to unpack. I opened my locker to find half the things I had left had been stolen. There was even a bullet hole in my radio.

"Nice of them to put it back after they used it for target practice," I said to myself.

"*Bande de Schwein*," I muttered and crawled into bed and fell asleep.

The next morning I was admitted to the infirmary at Gabode, my finger was cut open and drained every day for five days, my ailing tooth was filled and my infections and diarrhea were treated. I slept 12 hours a day, ate all the fly-covered food I could hold, and drank gallons of cold Vichy water. In 10 days I was

night. I jumped out of my sleep in a fright—if the Legion got you up in the middle of the night it was for real!

The duty sergeant rushed through the barracks, crying the alarm: "*Aux armes* (to arms)!"

All at once everything turned into pure pandemonium—shouting, yelling, and cursing from room to room; the whole post was in an uproar.

"*Sac d'alert! Tenue camouflée longue, beret!*"<sup>4</sup>

"*Allez! De nerdez-vous!*"

"*Allez! Demerd-toi, bordel!*"<sup>5</sup>

"*Rassemblement dans cinq minutes!*"<sup>6</sup>

The alert bag and uniform was a simple thing; we had been through it a hundred times over, but everyone also



given a hand shake and told congratulations, and asked a hundred questions.

"How was it?"

"Heard you had a rough go of it."

And then invariably, "what's wrong with your finger, Bride?"

"It's turning black, sir."

"Better see the *Medicine-Chef* at Gabode."

"*Oui, Chef, a vos ordres, Chef.*"

Then moving on to the next, we would do a repeat.

By now I had a fever and long red lines running from my wrist to my elbow. I went to the medic who dumped my black finger in alcohol, sliced the end with a razor, and squeezed it with all his might. I went a foot off the table.

"You stupid shit," I screamed. "Give me a pain killer and let me go to bed."

"No pain killer, Johnnie," he said.

"But you can go to bed, tomorrow you go to Gabode and see the *Medicine-Chef.*"

Legionnaire prepares to open fire during field maneuvers in southern France, 1975. Uniform is regulation parka and beret, weapon MAS-49-52, with blank adapter.

as good as new, and I returned to Holl-Holl in time for the celebration of *Camerone*<sup>2</sup>.

The next day I was given my corporal stripes and assigned command of a MG team which included myself, the gunner, assistant gunner, and *grenadier-voltigieur*<sup>3</sup>.

Time passed swiftly. We did our job and did it well. My only problem was my platoon commander, Adjutant Cara. Cara was a Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. When he drank, he was Hyde and a dangerous Hyde at that. He beat everyone he could, those who deserved it and those who didn't.

One hot night during the summer of 1974, the company was awakened by a series of shrill whistle blasts and cries of "Alert!" It was the first time I had heard the alarm sounded in the middle of the

had a specific function to perform during an alert. My task was to meet my MG team at the ammunition bunker and draw the basic ammo load for the entire section. Someone else was responsible for drawing our weapons.

Everyone in the barracks worked with feverish excitement despite all the screaming and yelling, and in 10 minutes I was standing in front of the ammunition bunker, awaiting the arrival of my crew. Keller hurried by in the dark, bent almost double under the weight of a .50 caliber heavy machine gun and loudly cursing providence in general and the Legion in particular.

I had just leaned back against the sand bags when I heard the unmistakable scream of Adjutant Cara.

"Bride (he always pronounced my name correctly), where are the ammo and grenades? *Bordel de merde* (damned shit), I'll have your ass!"

"I'm waiting for my crew," I said. "They haven't shown up. I've already

signed for the stuff; I'll start loading it myself—"

"Like hell you will. No corporal of mine is going to load ammo while his crew jacks off—" He drew back his arm to strike me but wasn't quick enough.

I was already sprinting full speed over the sand, heading for the barracks. I hit the front door at full gallop, almost dislocating my shoulder.

Two of my illustrious machine-gun team were sitting at the breakfast table, drinking coffee and eating their bread ration while "awaiting further orders."

Robinson, who was closest to me, was a Danish beerholic and well-known gold-brick.

"*Arschloch! Stehe-auf-du!* (Asshole! Get up!)" I screamed. "Cara is waiting at the ammo bunker! He's gonna beat your ass bloody: Where's Bejak gone?"

Robinson was so shaken I thought he was going to vomit. "I don't know, Corporal Bride, he was *Kaffeeholer* (coffee-getter) today."

"Shut up and get your ass down to the ammo shack. *Ab-Houen-Lauf!*" (Beat it! Run!)

Robinson ran out the door, his face twisted in fear, knowing damn well what Cara would do to him. He'd done it before. Just then Bejak, a Bosnian illiterate, entered the room.

"*Poste de Police nix cafe. Poste de Police nix cafe* (there's no coffee at the guard house)." Looking genuinely concerned, he repeated the information. "*Poste de Police nix cafe.*" Since our section was on guard duty, Bejak had volunteered himself to carry a pitcher of coffee to the guards, not wanting any man to go without his fair share.

Calming myself, I said, "*Ca va* (that's okay), Bejak, I'll give the coffee to the guards. OK, I'll do it myself, *ca va?* You get your ass down to the ammo bunker!"

Bejak placed the pitcher of coffee on the table and walked slowly to the door.

"*Lauf* (run!)" I screamed. I ran behind him, pushing him on his way. Cara, thank God, had disappeared for the moment, and the always reliable Bandera, my gunner, was just placing the last case on the truck.

We all climbed aboard and raced toward the assembly point where we picked up our personal weapons. We were the last truck in the Section to arrive. Luckily for me, Cara was pre-occupied and didn't have time to torment me over my slow performance.

After assembling the company and calling roll—the Legion loves to call roll; they even have bed check—we were told that Somalian forces had crossed the *frontier* (border) at Ghuister. By the light of lanterns, maps were spread out on truck hoods and orders were issued. We were to establish a defensive position, the company was to defend the water hole, the access road, and the fort. Our Section was assigned the access road.

Marching orders were issued. We climbed aboard the trucks and raced out the gate in a cloud of dust. The anticipation of adventure, which is an element in the Legion as inseparable as filth, hard work, and alcoholism, hung in the air. We knew where we were going, *le Capitaine* had told us himself! We had ammunition, grenades and rations for three days; we had eight .50 caliber machine guns and a dozen rocket launchers; we even had a mortar. We weren't that badly off for four sections of an unstrengthened rifle company, with the fifth section still in garrison.

After two hours of back-aching bouncing, we arrived at the access road to Ghuister. Here our driver let loose. Spinning out to the right of the convoy, we raced for our objective amidst a torrent of beer bottles and abuses thrown at us from those we passed. We responded in kind. Cara, standing up in the front of the truck, *a la Rommel*, was in heaven!

Camouflaging the trucks and establishing a section command post among the camel thorn bushes proved easy enough. We then posted skirmishers and set about digging in—or redigging in, seeing this was our fourth trip to this same location.

The next three days were loathsome beyond measure. We dug emplacements in the rocks, while Arabs stood idly by, noting our positions, then walking across the border into Somalia. The sun burned relentlessly from the cloudless sky, long camouflage trousers gave way to khaki shorts and berets to floppy bush hats. Water ran low and was rationed to one liter per man per day, not enough to live on in this environment. We supplemented it with Ethiopian Coca Cola, delivered daily from the fort by donkey. The Coke was hot and not nearly as good

a thirst quencher as water, but its sugar gave a boost and the acid did wonders for "burning out" the layers of mucus that formed on our tongues and lips when we were dehydrated.

We were all in a state of continual irritation, especially Cara, who spent hours sitting sullenly under his camouflage net, speaking to no one. From noon until four the white man is a useless object! In this infernal heat, we stripped to the waist and lay in our foxholes under our camo nets, trying to conserve our strength. To make things worse, we hadn't seen one Somali soldier.

My Section was made up of three 10-man *groupes*. Each *groupe* had two *equipes* (teams), one *equipe de choc* (shock team) and one *equipe de feu* (fire team). We had four NCOs, six corporals, and approximately 20 Legionnaires. As is usual in the Legion, our *Chef de Section* (platoon leader) was a senior noncom, Adjutant Cara, not an officer.

Our CP was situated on the left side of an *oued*<sup>7</sup>. We were about 200 meters from the Somalia border and about 800 meters from the fort. The *puit d'eau* (water hole) was about 100 meters to our right rear in the center of the *oued*. It was the daily meeting ground for nomads, even more so since our arrival. The presence of the Legion always attracted those looking for a hand out. The thought that this roving mass of black scarecrows, which assembled daily within talking distance of our position, contained informants in pay of the enemy, never seemed to have dawned on our leaders. If it did, we were never aware of it. The Legion Security officer was much too busy reading our mail to track down spies.

On the eve of our sixth night, Cara called me, Sgt. Minini, my *Chef de*



Brooks prepares to shoot non-issue MAS-36 rifle, loaned him by Arab guide, before his "section" (platoon) looks for night ambush position at La Barrage near Djibouti's coast.

Cpl. "Walter Bride" (Brooks' Legion "nom de guerre") carries FM-AA-52 LMG at Camp Gabode, Djibouti, near one of few fertile areas in this desert country.



Groupe, and Cpl. Batkin, the *Chef de Equipe Choc*, into his tent. Sitting on an ammo case, playing with his Randall Attack knife (ordered through me), Cara told us his brilliant, quick-witted scheme. Tonight, he said, *les bounjouis* were going to attack in force and we were not going to be caught sleeping. Batkin was to move his *equipe* to within 50 meters of the *frontier*<sup>8</sup> but further off to the left of the *oued*. He would then turn right and have the *oued* to his front. Our position would then be like an "L."

I told Cara that our base would be shorter than the arm.

"Shut up," he screamed and told me to take my machine gun team to a hill top about 100 meters to the rear of Batkin's team, place the machine gun in battery, and establish a point for the *grenadier*. Sgt. Minini was to place himself somewhere between both teams. He said that when the Somalis passed the border marker, we would have them in an "L" ambush.

I mumbled, "original," and Cara menacingly waved his attack knife in front of my face. Not wanting to be outdone, I unsheathed my own Randall Attack knife and began chipping hunks out of the ammo case which Cara used for a table.

His face, already permanently stained by a Johnie-Walker flush, turned crimson. "Bride," he screamed. "You'll stay on the hill 'till hell freezes over. Get out of my sight!"

"*Oui, mon Adjutant.*" I replied. I saluted and walked out of his tent over to my *groupe's* area. I threw 10 cans of Coca Cola into my musette, put on my jacket, and waited for Sgt. Minini.

Cara ordered us to take a case of ammunition, about 750 rounds, and the heavy barrel; the extra weight would be transported by Robinson and Bejak, who were already quarelling over who was going to carry what. We moved out over the rocks and organized our position so we could fire from the top of the hill during the day and from the base during the night. I purposely moved my men 30 meters closer to the *frontier* so they wouldn't be shooting into the backs of their comrades.

It was turning dark and each of us began to look for a spot to sleep, preferably one that was tarantula and scorpion-free. We set up a two-man guard team to stay with the machine gun while the others slept, made up of members of both *equipes*.

About two hours later, I was roused from my sleep by the sound of vehicles.

"They're coming up the *oued*!"

"*Aux armes! Aux armes!*"

Within one minute the whole Section was in place. Cara, carrying a big white walking stick, strode out into the middle of the *oued*. He raised the stick and thrust it into the ground.

"If they pass this point, shoot!" he commanded.

I jumped into Minini's foxhole and asked, "what in the hell is he doing?"

"*Le cafard; il cherche les mouches le mic 9 !*"

A patrol of Somalian regulars, in Russian trucks, was creeping along the *oued* in low gear. Unlike the French, the Somalis use their blackout lights at night. However, under a clear moon, it was

nearly as bright as day, and I could make out their distinct camouflage design.

The lead truck came to a halt and an officer dismounted and walked toward Cara. Two other soldiers disembarked and placed themselves on either side of the truck. Cara and the Somali officer began to haggle. It was ridiculous because neither one could understand the other. The officer turned and walked back to his truck and drove away.

Cara, still standing in the middle of the *oued*, pulled out his pistol and began walking back and forth nervously. Just then Adjutant Wilson, the 2nd Section Leader, came running up.

His section was emplaced on the opposite side of the *oued*, he said breathlessly, and the 1st Section was going to block the route leading from the well to the fort. The Nomad Company garrison was going to act as reserve.

Headquarters in Gabode had been notified and re-enforcements were on the way.

Wilson then asked Cara what he was going to do. Cara said he was going to stand in the middle of the *oued*. Wilson looked at him as if he were crazy and trotted off.

I moved out of Minini's hole and over to my MG team. My gunner was cussing in Spanish and nervously patting the feed cover. I turned to sit down behind a rock when the sky lit up and all hell broke loose.

Parachute flares and mines went off by the dozen, machine guns began firing, and red and blue tracers crossed the sky and ricocheted off rocks. Bandera went through 100 rounds before I could stop him.

"What in the hell are you shooting at?" I screamed.

"Somalis!"

"Where?" I asked.

He didn't answer; he just laid two more long bursts into the *oued* and reloaded.

Firing was still going on but I had no idea what was happening. The main point of resistance was in the area of the 2nd Section. Someone was even throwing grenades. Cara stood in the middle of the *oued*, popping away at shadows with his pistol.

Suddenly it stopped. Parachute flares were still floating lazily to the ground, giving off their characteristic fizzings. For a few seconds, no one spoke a word—then the night was shattered by a deluge of curses and oaths. In Arabic, Somalian, Spanish, Italian, French, and German, the most hideously vulgar and profanely elegant epithets were exchanged between the Somalis and the Legion. For a good five minutes the rocks resounded the hundred-score imprecations which damned the desert, the Legion, the Somalis, France, Arabs, niggers, Jesus Christ, The Virgin Mary, the Lord God Jehovah, and everybody's mother!

Finally, Cara told everyone to shut up.

# The Legion Jumps Into Zaire

by Mark Zytner

"French Foreign Legion Paratroopers Land at Kolwezi," proclaimed newspaper headlines across the nation following the 19 May 1978 combat jump by 400 paras in the first assault wave of the Legion's Second Paratroop Regiment (*LE 2eme Regiment Etranger de Parachutistes—2nd R.E.P.*), which, followed by the second wave of 250 more Legion paras, successfully rescued some 2,500 white hostages held by 4,000 Soviet-armed and Cuban-trained black Shaba rebels. Behind the headlines, however, is another story of years of tough professional training directed by Legion veterans which carried the spirit of victory into Zaire with the 2nd R.E.P.

Following the 12 May '78 invasion of Zaire's Shaba province (formerly Katanga), and the capture of the copper mining town of Kolwezi and its airport on the following day by Shaba rebels, who routed Zairian Army defenders, President Mobutu Sese Seko requested immediate foreign aid. France and Belgium were quick to respond, and even President Carter ordered 18 USAF C-141 *Starlifters*, based in West Germany, to be employed in logistical support of the joint rescue operation.

Following the receipt of movement orders, Colonel Philippe Erulin assembled his regiment, the Foreign Legion's 2nd R.E.P., based at Camp Raffali near Calvi on the northwest coast of Corsica, and entrucked his airborne assault force to the nearby French Air Force field where the combat-loaded Legionnaire paras, wearing their traditional green berets, filed into three chartered U.T.A. McDonnell Douglas DC-8s, one French Air Force DC-8, and one chartered Air France Boeing 707, which were waiting to carry the 650-strong Legion para regiment into Zaire.

While flying south to Africa over the blue Mediterranean, some of the Legion paras in one airplane attempted to bolster spirits by singing the Song of the 2nd R.E.P.:

*Sautons ensemble! Sautons ensemble!  
Legionnaires, nous ne reviendrons pas.  
La-bas, les ennemis t'attendent.  
Sois fier, nous allons au combat.  
(Jump together! Jump together!  
Legionnaires, we will not return.*

*There, below the enemy awaits you.  
Be brave. We are going into combat).*

It is an old song, dating back to the days of Dien Bien Phu, when Major Hubert Liesenfelt led the 2nd B.E.P. (predecessor to the 2nd R.E.P.) in a night drop on that besieged locality on April 10, 1954. Like many songs of the Legion paras, it is a French translation of a German World War II airborne song. But most of the 2nd R.E.P. Legionnaires do not know this, since their average age is only 22. Most of them hadn't even been born when Dien Bien Phu fell to the Communists, 24 years ago.

While the 2nd R.E.P. was still airborne on 18 May '78, enroute to Kinshasa (formerly Leopoldville), Zaire's capital, a dispute had already arisen at highest level between the French government and that of Belgium. With two battalions of Belgian paratroopers also enroute to Zaire, Belgian Premier Leo Tindemans, acting upon the advice of his intelligence officers, decided to withhold the initial combat deployment of his 1,200 red-bereted paratroopers in fear that General Nathaniel Mbomba, commander of the Cuban-trained Shaba rebel "Congolese National Liberation Front" (F.L.N.C.), would keep his promise and begin a general massacre of white hostages if foreign military forces intervened.

French President Giscard d'Estaing had other fears. His intelligence officers reported that a massacre had already begun and there was no time to lose. The French assessment proved to be basically correct. Looting, raping, and killing began when the first F.L.N.C. guerrillas entered Kolwezi. Some of it was even attributed to retreating Zairian regulars who deserted their six French military advisors, who fell into rebel hands.

On the evening of May 18, the 2nd R.E.P. landed at Kinshasa International Airport. More briefings, weapons checks, and equipment inspections by the 2nd R.E.P. company commanders and platoon leaders. Five French Air Force *Transall* C-160 transport planes were waiting at Kinshasa to carry the Legion paras to Kolwezi for their combat jump. In its first regimental-size combat action since the Algerian combat, the 2nd R.E.P. was going into combat the following afternoon.

At 1600 hours on 19 May '78, the assault wave of the 2nd R.E.P. went in alone over the town of Kolwezi, while the two battalions of Belgian paratroopers sat back at their Kamini base—130 miles north of Kolwezi. Against odds of nearly 10 to one, the Legionnaire paras had to secure a quick victory or face possible annihilation. One of the first Legion para sticks, jumping from the *Transall* C-160s, landed directly into a strongly held F.L.N.C. position. One Legionnaire was killed and several were wounded, but many more Shaba rebels died from the fire of that Legion band.

Before the drop, Colonel Erulin told the 2nd R.E.P., "Act like Legionnaires! Don't let anything stop you." They didn't. Armed with MAT49 9mm sub-machine guns, MAS M49/56 7.5mm rifles, MAS M52 7.5mm general purpose machine guns (a French version of the German MG42 light machine gun), and

assorted grenades, the tough Legionnaire paras fought their way into the heart of Kolwezi. Most of the FLNC "Tigers" fled like frightened pussy cats in panic, but some Shaba rebels stayed to fight and die. Other FLNC rebels made a calculated withdrawal, using over 100 captured civilian vehicles.

The Kolwezi technical school fell first. Bodies of gunned down whites were found by the Legionnaires. Some had been mutilated. The hardest fighting centered around the police station, which the F.L.N.C. used as its headquarters. By noon of May 20, Kolwezi, which has a normal population of 15,000, was free of organized rebel resistance. The second wave of 250 Legionnaire paras landed to bring the entire 2nd R.E.P. into action at Kolwezi. At the cost of two Legionnaires killed and 14 wounded, Kolwezi had been secured at a ridiculously cheap price! Some 250 Shaba rebels were killed in the mainly one-sided fighting and remained where they fell. Approximately 190 white hostages had been killed by the Cuban-trained rebels and another 200 black civilians were also killed by the FLNC. Another 60 whites were retained by the retreating rebel "Tigers." The bodies of 40 of these whites, murdered by the FLNC, were found two days later by Legionnaires.

One reliable report states that the Cuban advisors to the F.L.N.C. had even accompanied the invaders into Kolwezi on May 13 and upon their withdrawal and return to Angola, Shaba rebels began running amuck in their looting, raping, and killing. The 2nd R.E.P. Legionnaires also destroyed one tank from a rebel three-tank platoon. The remaining two tanks were last seen retreating southwest toward Angola.

Seeing the situation well in hand, Premier Tindemans finally gave the "go" signal to the two Belgian para battalions at Kamina. They dropped on May 20 into the Kolwezi airport, already held by shaky Zairian troops. Quickly moving into the town of Kolwezi without firing a shot, the Belgian paras helped with the evacuation of 2,500 white civilians. Back at the airport, the Zairian troops were on hand to engage in final looting from the refugees as they boarded planes for return to Belgium or France.

The comparatively soft Belgian paras (soft in comparison to the Legionnaires, not to the Shaba rebels) were quick to call the 2nd R.E.P. Legionnaires "professional killers," claiming they were trigger happy, rough on civilians, and charged them with killing six white civilians. Colonel Philippe Erulin quickly and rightfully denied the charge.

Last to come and first to leave, the two battalions of Belgian paras were pulled out on 23 May '78, one battalion returning to Kamina and the other back to NATO control in Europe. While the Belgians were pulling out, the 2nd R.E.P. paras were now clearing the area surrounding Kolwezi of rebel bands. Two more Legionnaires were killed in the ensuing action. Ordered to withdraw to Lubumbashi (formerly Elizabethville) on 27 May '78, the 2nd R.E.P. was still in Kolwezi the following day. In June, an all-African peacekeeping force was flown into Zaire and the 2nd R.E.P. was returned to Corsica.

There are still pockets of F.L.N.C. guerrillas in Shaba province, and it is likely that the fighting will be going on there for many months, due to another "privileged sanctuary"—this time in Angola. On May 28, Soviet-armed Shaba rebels again recaptured the key railway center of Mutshatsha, 63 miles west of Kolwezi.

The Zairian Army is of dubious quality, as the 2nd R.E.P. Legionnaire paras discovered. With the mission of blocking rebel escape routes from Kolwezi during the fighting of May 19 and 20, the Zairian Army failed miserably—just as it did in its initial defense of the mining town. Shortly before the FLNC invasion from Angola, Kolwezi had been designated as headquarters of the Shaba Military Region under command of General Danga. Following the recapture of Kolwezi by the Legion, President Mobutu ordered the execution of the Zairian Army commander at Kolwezi for cowardice in the face of the enemy.

Relations between General Mobutu and the Belgian government are quickly deteriorating at the time of this report. Some 25,000 Belgian civilians remain in Zaire and many believe that Premier Tindemans is letting them down. Like those in Kolwezi, they may face danger in the near future.

Since 19 May 1978, the words of the favorite Legion song, *Le Boudin* (Blood Sausage), written in 1870, have taken on a new significance, as Legionnaires of the 2nd R.E.P. will testify.

The words of *Le Boudin* are as follows:

*Tiens, voila du boudin,*

*Viola du boudin,*

*Viola du boudin.*

*Pour les Alsaciens, les Suisses et les Lorrains,*

*Pour les Belges, n'y en a plus*

*Pour les Belges n'y en a plus,*

*Ce sont des tireurs au cul*

*Tireurs o-o-o-o-o-o-o-o-cul!*

(Blood Sausage)

(Hey, Here's the sausage! Here's the sausage!

For the Alsatis, the Swiss, and the men of Lorraine.

But there's none for the Belgians

Because they are a band of shirkers.)



Sgt. William Brooks and friends relax before forming up for 1st REC (Legion Cavalry Regiment) ceremony at Orange, France. Uniform is "tunique sortie," or walking-out dress.

"Bride," he yelled. "What do you see?"

"*Rien* (nothing), *mon Adjutant*." I had to yell, because we were a good 100 meters apart. He was still standing in the middle of the *oued*, pistol in hand.

"Minini, you and Bride run across the frontier and see what's up. Come back in five minutes."

Minini told the radio operator to tell the 2nd Section we were coming through. I told Bandera not to shoot anything until I got back. We walked across the border and around a bend in the *oued* and into the 2nd Section's area of responsibility.

"*Putain de merde* (shitty. whore)," muttered Minini.

A body lay amongst the rocks on the far side. Another lay a few meters away.

"Must have come back on foot. Maybe some more will show up."

"I doubt it," I said. "They only make a habit of doing this every month or so. Hey, Sergeant, look here. This one's still got his weapon!" I pulled an East German MP44 assault rifle out from between the rocks. "Maybe I can keep it," I said softly.

"That's between you and Cara. Come on, let's go. This place *se pourrir* (is rotten)." We walked back down the *oued*, bumping into a five-man patrol from 2nd section on the way. They told us the Somalis had come back on foot in platoon strength. They were now a good two kms inside their own borders and we were forbidden to pursue them.

Cara, Adjutant Wilson, and *Capitaine* Kaye were now standing near the frontier marker.

"Two Somalis dead 200 meters down the *oued*, 2nd Section has a patrol out," Minini said, saluting.

"Minini, pull your *Equipe Choc* back to where you were this afternoon," Cara said. "Leave Bride on the hill."

I saluted but didn't say anything. I turned to walk away when Cara noticed

the MP44 strapped to my back.

"Oh, Bride, where are you going with that *Klutzkopf*? *Donne moi* (give me)! *Donne moi!*"

I reluctantly handed Cara the MP44 and trudged up the hill to my emplacement. Bandera was in a state of nervous anticipation. He had already recamouflaged the area and was now linking together more belts.

"How many did I get, Corporal Bride? Come on and tell me. I know I got the lot, they were on foot, must have been 10 or 15. You saw 'em, didn't you, Robinson?"

Robinson was lying on his back, smoking a Gauloise, his legs and feet at a 90 degree angle to his torso. "I didn't see shit, Corporal Bride. Bandera didn't either."

"*Schwein du Robinson!*" Bandera screamed and drew back his first.

Cara yelled from the *oued* for everyone to shut up or get eight days' *pelote*. I started back for my hole.

"Come on, Corporal Bride, tell me how many I got."

I stopped and turned around. "You killed six, Bandera, and scared the rest away. You saved the company from being overrun. You can go and see for yourself in the morning," I said sleepily.

Bandera grinned like a mule eating briars. "Maybe they'll come back. I'm gonna stand guard all night, Corporal Bride. I'm gonna sit right here behind my piece."

"You do that, Bandera. I'm going to sleep." I stumbled over the rocks until I reached my hole. Not bothering to take off my gear, I lay down on my back, placing my weapon against a rock. I cupped my hands behind my head and stared at the clear desert sky.

"Someday," I said to myself. "Someday, I'm going to write all of this down."

In the near distance came a short flurry of rifle fire followed by Cara's unmerciful voice screaming orders, counter orders, and profanities. I rolled over on my side and went to sleep.



Cara and I continued to exist together until one day in October 1974, when our platoon was training on the obstacle course. One of the obstacles was a 15-foot steel ladder. After I negotiated this obstacle, Cara ordered me to do it again. This time, however, I was to jump to the ground from the top instead of climbing down two or three rungs, as was the usual procedure. I reluctantly did as I was told and in so doing slipped a disc in my back when I hit the ground. The next day I was in the infirmary at Gabode.

My days as an *exterieur* were over. I was assigned a soft job in the infirmary as a dental assistant and began living a life of comparative ease. Brunin and I shared the same room in a newly erected barracks complete with showers and toilets. The toilets, however, were locked, and when one needed to answer the call of nature, he had to walk 50 meters to a filthy latrine and use the holes provided. The common practice amongst the French was to piss out the window, off the veranda, or on the side of the building. The place stank of stale urine.

In December, I was taken off the exempt P.T. list and tried out for the Legion cross-country team. I also represented the command company in the pistol matches, finishing fifth in regimental competition. In February 1975, I was deemed fit enough to attend the Legion Noncommissioned Officers' School at

Oueah, where the Legion Reconnaissance Squadron was located. This was quite an honor, since most of the candidates had had more than five years' service.

The school began the last week of February and contained 36 *eleve sous-officiers*. The training was a far cry from what I had previously been subjected to. Our lieutenant was an excellent officer, as were our three NCO instructors. We developed a comradeship within our group which made us seem special. Our military bearing set a good example for those around us. We received extensive training in desert navigation and night-time commando operations. My French improved considerably.

After the fourth week, we moved to the tent city of Ali-Sabieh, where I had suffered a year earlier. A shower stall had since been constructed, and daily bathing certainly helped us from acquiring many of those infections which had plagued me a year before. The water, however, was still undrinkable in its natural state.

By April, when we had almost completed the course, disaster struck. The Ethiopian government flipfopped. Ever since the overthrow of Haile Selassie, the Ethiopians had remained basically pro-France in order to retain use of the Djibouti-Addis-Ababa Railroad. Suddenly, they launched an all-out attack against the rebels in Asmara.

In Djibouti itself a bomb went off in front of the Chamber of Deputies and riots broke out in the streets. All troops in the Territory were placed on alert and two companies of Legion paras were flown in from Calvi. At school, we were instructed to accelerate instruction and required to perform security duties such as patrolling the rail lines from Ali-Sabieh to Daovenie as well as posting a double guard around the camp.

During the first week in April, I had been informed that I would be leaving the Territory and returning to France the last week of June. This news certainly lifted my spirits, but I was convinced now that a major war was going to break between Ethiopia and Somalia with us in the middle. I wanted to get to see it and began to volunteer for everything: night patrol, railroad patrol, border patrol.

These extra duties, however, didn't deter us from our course of study. We assumed we would soon be making good use of what we were learning and we began to combine our instruction and our Security missions. Sometimes our whole class would form into an infantry platoon and sweep the *frontier*, crossing the border into Ethiopia at night and counting heads.

It must have been a platoon leader's dream: Every man only a few days from being promoted to the coveted *Legion Sous-Officier*. Commands were not

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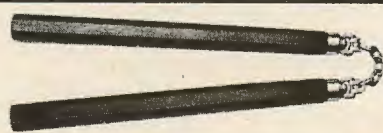
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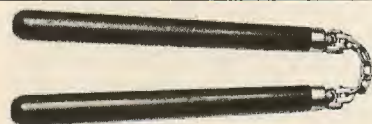
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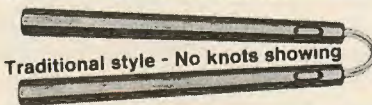


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necessary. We moved like well-oiled machines, each one taking his turn as team leader, squad leader, and platoon chief. We were quick to obey and quick to question. On Sunday, April 27, 1975, we took our final test and everyone passed. We had lost only six men during the eight weeks, due primarily to disciplinary problems.

That night we cooked a freshly slaughtered goat and drank some *pinard*<sup>10</sup>. Some got drunk. Around midnight the lieutenant entered my tent and asked me who else I knew who wasn't drunk.

I mentioned a few names and he said, "Good, I'll go wake them up. You get dressed, get a PM (sub-machine gun), two full magazines, and some defensive grenades. Take your canteen and blacken your face; meet me in 10 minutes outside my tent."

"*Oui, mon Lieutenant*," I said sleepily.

Another ambush, I thought. Why me this time though? I was tired. What the hell, I thought, tomorrow I'll be back at Gabode. Maybe we'll see some armed *bounjouis*.

I waited outside the lieutenant's tent. Six of us showed up. We were told to occupy the ground four kms from Ali-Sabieh next to Fort Daovenie. We were to watch the trail and the railroad. Report anything that looked suspicious and stop anyone that was armed.

"And stay awake!" the lieutenant concluded.

There was no tenseness—it looked routine; after all, I'd been doing it for 2½ years. We advanced to the base of the hill and placed ourselves in position to fire upwards. I was on the extreme right, about five meters from the railroad. I could see the lights in Daovenie and the road running up from Ethiopia, ending at a pig pen. I opened my canteen and began to drink. Everybody was just as relaxed. The *Belge* and the Greek were smoking and clanking the ammo belts and machine gun bipod against the rocks.

Suddenly I heard a truck engine. My throat froze. I felt like vomiting. It was an Ethiopian squad, jumping off the trail and moving down the railroad. Five, six, seven, eight, I counted.

One was coming right up the tracks towards me, a banana clip plainly silhouetted in his weapon. I dropped my canteen and picked up my PM and screamed.

I was squeezing the trigger. The 20-round magazine almost emptied in one long burst. Immediately the machine gun opened up. I slammed my face down on the ground and tried to reload but my second magazine had fallen into the rocks.

Suddenly everyone was shooting. I looked up over my rock and fired another

short burst, emptying my weapon, then once again hid my face in the sand.

Then it all stopped. The truck was no longer in sight but I could hear its engine whining in low gear. Lights were on all over Daovenie and trucks were racing to our rescue from Ali-Sabieh, headlights on full beam! There was much nervous chatter when the lieutenant arrived. We were all called in, and he made out a report which we signed.

By this time it was close to four a.m., so we all walked to the mess hall and had some coffee. When we returned, a company of AMX 13 tanks were moving into the area.

"Let's all go over and see what happened last night," the lieutenant said. "I gotta make sure it's right."

We threw our gear in the large T-46 truck and boarded a smaller VLR. We arrived at the area at first light.

"Come look at this, lieutenant," someone called, and we all walked down the tracks together.

I passed the MG emplacement and noticed about 50 spent cases on the ground. I presumed I had been further to the right but just exactly where I didn't know, or care.

Approaching a group of officers, we all saluted. They were standing over a corpse. His weapon was missing but his ammo pouches were for an AK-47. The rim of his camouflage hat had dropped

# Night Watch

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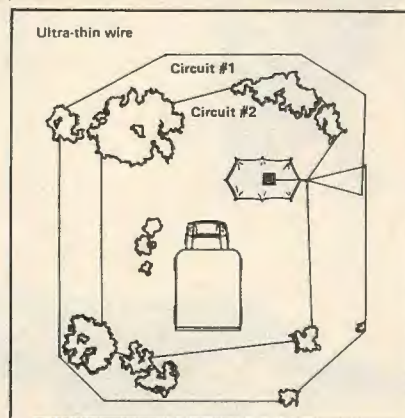
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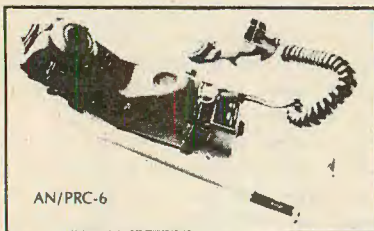
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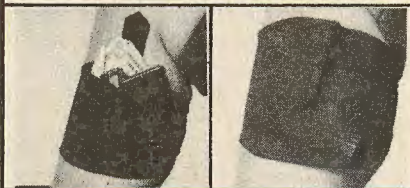
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around his neck. The top of his head was blown off.

"Somali or Ethiopian?" I asked.

"Issas, by the build," someone replied.

"More blood by the crest, someone else was hit too," an excited young Legionnaire blurted out.

"Nice work, lieutenant," said the army colonel.

"*Merci (thanks), mon Colonel.*"

"Nice work, Bride," the lieutenant repeated.

"It wasn't me, sir, Badkin had the 52." (AA52, light machine gun, model 1952)

"Badkin got the one on the crest. This one is yours," he said.

"Maybe," I said. "But I don't believe it." I turned away and got on the truck.

Two weeks later I stepped off the plane in Marseille. I had \$1000 in my pocket and two months' leave.

Leave in the Foreign Legion is called *permission*. A Legionnaire may accumulate 10 days his first year and 20 days every year afterwards. Once you complete an overseas tour you are given 60 days as a bonus. This 60 days may be taken when and where you want only if you are an NCO. Other ranks are required to spend their leave time in designated Legion barracks and are required to sign in and out every morning, just like prison trustees. Upon completion of the NCO school, I was given the rank of Chief Corporal. 60 days later, I was promoted to sergeant, the first grade of NCO. Also at this time my real identity was returned, and I stopped using the alias Bride.

During my 60 days' *permission*, I was assigned to the Legion Rest Hotel located at Malmousque in Marseille. I spent a pleasant summer on the beach and travelled about the south of France. It was a real holiday. At the end of this period, I returned to Aubagne and was assigned to the 1st Foreign Cavalry Regiment in Orange.

I arrived there on September 26, 1975. Due to my back injury, I was exempt from the infantry and made an assistant secretary in Technical Services. The chief of Technical Services, a commandant, was assisted by three senior NCOs, one for munitions, one for gasoline, and one for vehicles. Three corporals were assistants to these three noncoms.

I was given the job of accounting for the monthly consumption of fuel. At the end of every month, I totalled the gasoline, oil, and antifreeze consumption and sent the report into regional HQ at Marseille. My immediate superior was *Adjutant-Chef* Steinmetz, a former Wehrmacht lieutenant who had about 27 years' service in the Legion and was one of the finest men I had ever met.

Because my job took only three or four days' work each month, I had loads of free time, which I used to my best advantage. Because of my job status, I was accepted and known by every officer on

post. I used my position to try to seriously discuss the faults I had witnessed during my four years with the Legion.

I thought if one could take the good points of the American Army and the good points of the Legion and combine them, we could have a first-class military organization. I'll never know if what I said fell on receptive ears. The Legion is too small maybe, only 8,000 men. It is too bound by traditions which please no one. The Legion's two greatest celebrations, *Camerone* and Christmas, are, for the Legionnaire, a pain in the ass. Preparation involves a series of endless work details, decorating, and at Christmas, cutting trees and setting up a ridiculous *creche* (manger scene) in every barracks room. These scenes are then inspected and judged by the colonel. The Legionnaires are rewarded by a bottle of *pinard*.

Personally, I found the idea of a bunch of Legionnaires being forced to construct elaborate manger scenes a trifle hypocritical. All men are confined to post the night before Christmas, and the Christ child is saluted by a compulsory roaring drunk that begins in the mess hall at midnight. I apparently am not alone in my feelings. One Christmas a *creche* constructed by some Legionnaire humorist contained the nativity scene offset by a human skull placed near the baby Jesus. I'm sure it gave the chaplain quite a shock.

Although my five-year tour was nearing its end, I had seen neither the war nor the *coup d'etat* I had hoped for. Nothing had changed. I exaggerated my military appearance. My boots were too shiny and my fatigues too well pressed. My fatigues were starched, by me, by hand—the French never heard of starch. I overexaggerated my "pop-to," slapping my side, throwing my head back, and blurring out, "Mes respects, mon Lieutenant!"

I lost myself in books on the OAS (*Organisation Armee Secrete*—Secret Army Organization) and the *putsch* of 1961. I read and reread the stories of the Anti-Gaullist Vichy Milice and the courageous battles of the German-sponsored French SS. I convinced myself that there were good French soldiers, even if the country was half communist. I drove Steinmetz crazy with questions.

"Were the French as sorry 25 years ago? How would you compare the Wehrmacht with the Legion? Have you ever met a Frenchman who knows how to use a toilet?" He put up with me, even if it wasn't easy, for he did the work of four men.

One day, I was sitting at my desk in the Technical Services office, twiddling my thumbs, when *Capitaine* "S-1" from the Operations Bureau burst in the door.

Sweating profusely and short of breath, he demanded, "Brooks, you know a lot

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about weapons. What's the penetrating power of the 5.56mm cartridge?"

"I really don't know *mon Capitaine*, but I could find out," I said. "Why?"

Still gasping for breath, he placed both hands on my desk and, leaning into my face, he yelled, "It's this damn question of rifle versus assault rifle. If the army adopts the assault rifle in 5.56mm, we will lose our most potent anti-aircraft arm! How many American helicopters were shot down in Vietnam by rifle fire?" He replied before I could answer, "I know it must have been many."

"I don't understand, *mon Capitaine*," I stuttered.

"Well, you see, this question of caliber is very important. We use 7.5mm but if we adopt 5.56mm, as proposed, we will lose our anti-aircraft arm. The rifleman is the mainstay of any anti-aircraft defense."

"What are you talking about?" I asked again.

"Well, you see, Brooks, the French army's main anti-aircraft arm is the individual rifleman, and if the rifleman is not armed with a rifle capable of shooting down aircraft, then we will be at a tremendous loss. Therefore, I propose we retain the MAS 49/56 *fusil* in caliber 7.5mm and not adopt the new assault rifle in the 5.56mm cartridge unless its penetrating power is equal to that of the 7.5mm. See what you can find, Brooks, and report to me tomorrow at the latest." He hurried out the door.

I sat there dumbfounded. I could hear him running down the steps and out of the building. Still not believing what I had heard, I got up and walked to the window. *Capitaine* "S-1" was advancing towards the colonel's office in long quick strides.

"The individual rifleman is the mainstay of France's anti-aircraft defense," I repeated out loud. "It's unbelievable. Totally unbelievable." I turned and looked at A/C Steinmetz. He never looked up.

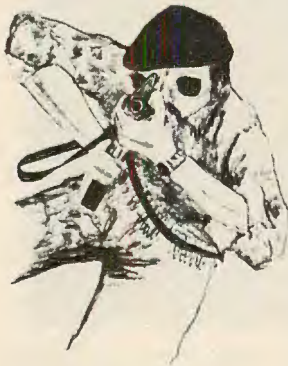
A few days later, the NCO mess was visited by the commanding general of the French Foreign Legion. Attendance, in formal attire, was mandatory. After a few minutes of introduction, the general rose to speak. "The Role of the Legion Today" was his subject, and he explained the disposition of troops by regiment and the situation in each area, particular emphasis being placed on the current situation in Djibouti. The NCO corps listened intently, grim-faced and serious.

The general then said, "The Legion will always be a modern arm within a modern army."

"A modern arm within a modern army," I repeated to myself. Then I started to smile. The idea, the mere idea, I thought to myself. I wanted to burst out laughing. I surveyed the room. The NCOs were totally engrossed in the general's speech. There wasn't one smile among

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them, not even a smirk. I felt as if I were adrift at sea; the general was still talking but I heard nothing. I felt drunk.

"A modern arm within a modern army." I repeated the words over and over in my mind.

"My God," I thought. "They actually believe it, look at them, they believe it, they really believe it!" I was dumbfounded. When the general's speech ended, I excused myself from the table and went to my room. I lay down on my bed and placed a towel over my eyes.

"They have convinced themselves, the damn fools; they have convinced themselves, the bloody, beautiful fools!"

Since the Legion-led *putsch* in Algiers collapsed in 1961, the Legion and its officer corps have continually been held in suspicion by the French government. In the Legion, I found a large number of officers were fascists, monarchists, Petainists, and generally anti-communists. While in the Legion, I continually had the feeling that certain officers were feeling me out politically, always trying to ascertain my reliability so if and when the next *putsch* occurred they'd know whom to count on.

Shortly before the end of my enlistment, an officer approached me and asked what I was going to do when I left the Legion.

"Join the OAS," I replied.

"You can't start your own private war, Brooks."

"Why not, sir? I know the enemy."

"Who's that?" he asked.

"Monsieur Marchais and the communists," I replied. "How can you expect to hold France in the West when she is not willing to support her own defense? No wonder the communists are calling for the disbanding of the Legion; without the Legion the Russians would get here quicker."

"If the communists gain power, would you fight?" he asked seriously.

"Fight for whom? I asked.

"Pour la France!" he replied.

I looked him in the eye. He looked away, giving me time to think before I answered.

"In 30 days I'll be in America, sir," I said.

"But will you fight for France?" he repeated.

"You'll have to send me a plane ticket," I replied, smiling.

"But you'll come?"

"Yes."

He handed me a folded piece of paper. "Don't look at it now," he ordered. Then he walked away.

That evening I opened the paper. It said:

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I placed the paper in my wallet. I still have it.



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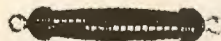
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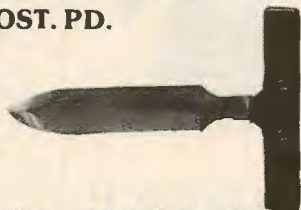
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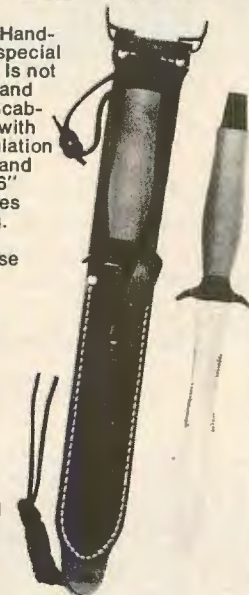
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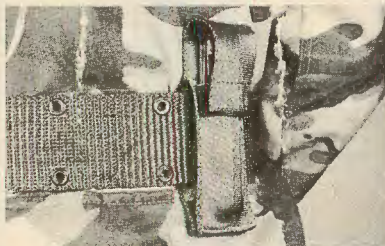
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I was elated. The fact that the notorious Delta Commandos of the anti-De Gaulle OAS were largely officers and men of the Foreign Legion has led to an uneasy truce between the Legion, the French Army, and the government in power. As the number of French Communist Party members increase and the threat of a left-wing coalition hangs overhead, it is most certain that right-wing factions in the Legion will take violent countermeasures if a Communist-Socialist Coalition gains power in France. George Marchais, French Communist Party boss, has already called for the dissolution of the Legion, calling it an arm of imperialism which has outlived its purpose. But if the Legion dies, why not give the French Communists the devil to pay?

On January 19, 1977, I left the French Foreign Legion. In my suitcase was my honorable discharge, signed by Lt. Colonel Tribout, an officer I had never seen nor met. I was neither happy nor sad. I felt that I was still a Legionnaire in spirit. I took a train to Paris, anxiously anticipating my rendezvous with whom-ever it was I was supposed to meet. At the prescribed time, I was standing in front of a restaurant at the location that had been specified on the paper. The streets were crowded and the flea market doing a thriving business as usual.

"*Marechal des Logis* (Sgt.)," someone said.

"*Oui*," I replied.

A short man about 50 years old was standing before me. "Do you have your *Carnet de Services*?"

I reached in my trench coat pocket and withdrew my card marked "*Republique Francaise—Ministere des Armees—Legion Etrangere*." I handed it to him. He opened it, studied the contents, and gave it back.

"*Tres bien* (very good). Do you speak French?"

"*Oui*," I replied nervously.

"I presumed so. Let's talk," he said.

We entered the restaurant and ordered beer and a *casse-croute* (sandwich).

"What did you think of the Legion?" he asked.

"Educational," I replied.

He didn't smile. Studying me, he asked, "What did you think of General De Gaulle?"

"He was a Frenchman, he believed in what he was doing. He was no soldier like *Le Marechal* Petain, Maybe it would have been better for France if he had died. He tried to dissolve the Legion, you know? He allied himself with the communists," I said.

"I respect *Le Marechal* Petain, I don't respect De Gaulle. De Gaulle was an imposter, Petain was a soldier." I stopped talking and took a drink of beer.

"An American sergeant in the Foreign Legion," he muttered. "What do you think of that? That is good enough to be a lieutenant in the OAS."

"*Merci, mon Colonel*," I replied.

He continued, ignoring the rank I had clumsily given him. "All I want is a permanent address where you can be reached." He shoved a napkin across the table to me. I wrote an address and

telephone number on the paper and shoved it back.

"*Tres bien, Monsieur Brooks,*" he said. He spoke excellent French, and was well dressed. After taking a long drink of beer, he slowly placed the glass back on the table, looked me again in the eyes, and said in a slow, implacable tone, "When *La France* falls in the shit, you'll be called."

"You may have to send me plane fare," I replied jokingly.

"Makes no difference, I'll have your ticket ready sometime next week."

"Were you in the Legion, *mon Colonel?*" I asked.

"I am *Nollet,*" he replied. "Call me what you wish—that is not important—but don't forget my face." He slid out of the booth and stood up. "Please finish your sandwich."

"No, thank you, *mon Colonel.* I want to walk with you." I started to pay the bill but he took it from me and handed it to the cashier, who looked at me suspiciously and then threw the bill away. We stepped out onto the cold, dirty street. It started to drizzle.

"Here is where we part," he said, as he extended his hand. I thank you for the

service you have rendered France, in my name, and the name of my country."

"*Merçi, mon Colonel,*" I said. I almost snapped to attention.

"I hope I never see you again," he said, "but there are so few of us left. Who else will save us, who else cares?" He looked at me again, dropping my hand and thrusting his own into his coat pocket. "*Au revoir, mon camarade.*"

"*Au revoir, mon Colonel.*"

He turned and walked slowly into the crowd. It began to snow.

Two days later, I boarded a plane for New York, and nine hours later, I was circling J.F.K. Airport where the runways were slick and it was depressingly overcast. We circled overhead for 40 minutes. Then the plane made its approach, the wheels touched down, and we came to a halt alongside the terminal. I found my kit bag and approached the customs counter. I handed a customs official my passport.

"What do you have in here?" he asked, pointing to my bag.

"Personal items," I replied.

"Open it and let me see," he commanded. "Are you military?"

"Yes, sir," I replied.

He handed me back my passport and said, "Go on through."

I walked through the door, past a guard, and onto the street. Outside it was beginning to snow.

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4. Alert bag! Take long cammies and beret.
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6. Assemble in five minutes.
7. Oued: French-Arabic for dried river bed.
8. Frontier: border. In this case it was marked by a pile of rocks about one meter high.
9. He's crazy; he's got the bug and he's looking for flies!
10. Legion jargon for the cheap wine served Legionnaires.

In the next issue of *SOF*, look for our analysis of the overall strengths and deployment of French Foreign Legion forces throughout the world, by John S. Arvidson, *USAR, Ret.*



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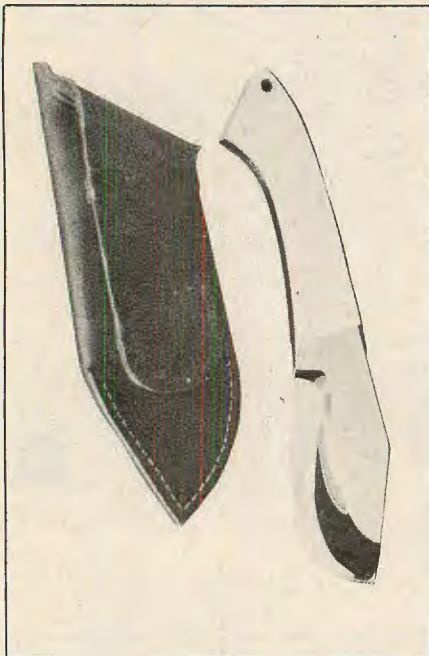
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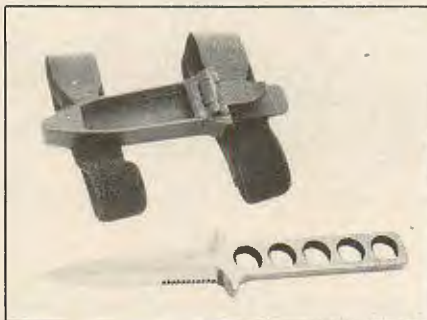
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SOLDIER OF FORTUNE



Tekna-Lite™ II is Tekna-Lite's™ younger brother, using two pen-light batteries instead of four. Basically the

same as Tekna-Lite, it is larger and is ideal for backpackers, fishermen, and hunters. It is 5½ inches long.

trip. Belgian FN-FALs left over from the defunct Lebanese army are desirable for their grenade-tossing abilities and range.

Mortars, made by the Soviets, the U.S., and Israel are used in all calibers with great effect. I was never able to get close enough to identify the artillery in use by either side, but it was most assuredly there!

Mines, both anti-personnel and anti-vehicle, are a common problem. The anti-pers mines are best avoided by stepping on rocks, the anti-vehicle mines by crossed fingers and a heavy foot.

Medical facilities for both sides are quite good if the wounded can reach them. The Rightists go to Israel and the Leftists to hospital in Sidon. Still, the doctors can't patch everything and the pain of war is an unavoidable sight. The blind, the crippled, and the maimed are everywhere. Orphans sell cigarettes from cardboard boxes at every turn, even in battle areas. Half-conscious, bleeding fighters sway in bouncing trucks, dodging sniper fire, on their way to aid stations. Lost and starving animals roam everywhere, shunned or shot out of hand because of the danger of rabies. No war can be called clean, but Lebanon's has been particularly vicious with

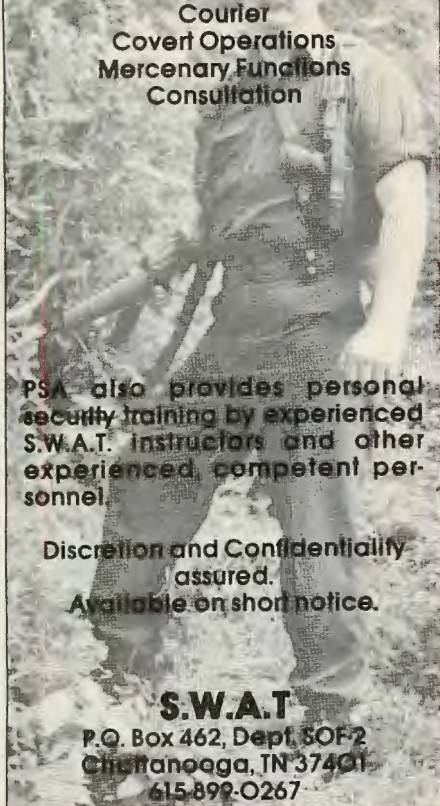
frequent incidents of grisly torture and civilian slaughter.

Yet through it all the Lebanese people, Christian and Moslem alike, retain the honesty and decency that is the hallmark of civilization. They deserve better.

In the field the Fatah travel light. After the uniform (or jeans) and weapon come boots, preferably with puncture-proof soles, a web belt, ammo pouch, canteen, perhaps a knife, and headgear, either a fatigue cap or the flowing Arab headdress.

The uniform hodge-podge and lack of definite lines results in frequent accidental firing. It was often impossible to tell who was shooting at whom. Unless

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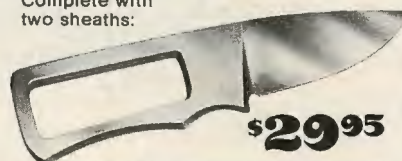


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one side or the other is launching a serious attack, most are content to sit back and swap automatic weapons fire. There would be some moving around to get better fields of fire, but neither side was prepared to throw away many lives on everyday sniping and skirmishing incidents.

The whole war is very unlike the western idea of war. The west approaches battle as a cold, calculated affair with timetables, objectives, and organization. The Arab fighter is more emotional. Experience has put an end to wild charges into machine gun muzzles but the burning desire to get to battle is still very evident and tactics often take

second place to simply opening fire and letting off steam. It is a lot like New York City at three a.m. One of the two bands I visited resembled nothing so much as a bike club or street gang that had traded their motorcycles and switch-blades for automatic weapons. I prowled the region on foot, in rattle-trap Land Rovers, and Japanese sport trucks with them. Days were spent in abandoned houses or sweltering in shallow positions. Nights were taken up huddled in the stony countryside or crouched in broken glass and rubble, waiting in silent, demolished homes and shops.

Lebanon has seen great numbers of foreign fighters involved in its struggles.

For years the Palestinians have received a constant stream of Arab volunteers, both individuals arriving on their own, and organized groups, trained and untrained. During the civil war in the north, soldiers arrived from across Europe to join the ranks of the Rightist forces. Others came to the Leftists from Europe, Arabia, and as far away as Japan.

Pay varied from zero upwards. Many factions of both sides have ample funds. The Right has the support of business and Israel. The Left has the support of the Arab world, notably Iraq and Libya, and of obscure, but loaded, oil sheiks. During the battle in Beirut, three major

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banks fell for a total take of over \$80 million, which also went into the war chests.

Anarchy still reigns and a fighter willing to take his chances can likely find a place, but it is getting trickier. Rightist forces with training and support from Israel hardly need mercs, and Israel, ever conscious of security, is discouraging foreigners in Rightist ranks. The Left will always take in people, but the political implications are obvious. With the area being discussed now occupied by United Nations troops, fluid combat is greatly restricted. The Lebanese government is now getting on its feet again and has tightened the

issuing of visas to restrict the flow of "renegade" fighters. Americans take a particularly great chance. Many Leftist bands will shoot, out of hand, on sight of an American passport. If you get into trouble, it's all over, and the embassies that are open cannot help you.

If you do get into trouble, save the last bullet for yourself. So many massacres and incidents of gruesome torture have happened here that a prisoner has no chance of survival. With luck, he'll get a bullet in the head. More likely, death will take a bit longer. The hatreds are generations old. There is no questioning the courage of either side in Lebanon. Whatever you think of its cause or motives, you never have reason

to worry about waking up and finding everyone has split, or of watching a plan fall apart because one man won't get up and shoot.

After my return to Beirut, it was still my hope to observe the Rightist forces at work in the south. Falangists in Beirut filled my pockets with names and insisted I try to get to their side via Israel. It was a slim hope, but why not? The route to Israel was circuitous and took several days over three countries. Alas, the Israelis were not enthusiastic. At the time they forbade any entry into Lebanon, but were otherwise helpful and courteous, offering a tour of the Golan and the border region. Time to move on.

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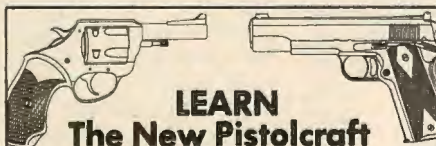
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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Steele holds a Master's degree in Police Science. He served as rifle and pistol instructor for the National Rifle Assoc., and as supervisor for the Police Weapons Center Project at the International Assoc. of Chiefs of Police. Steele, an accomplished fencer, has written several books on small arms.

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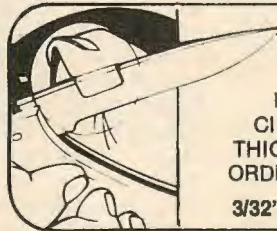


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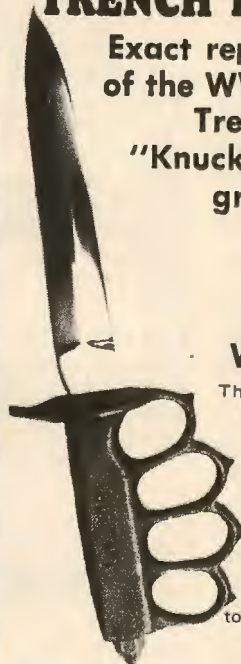
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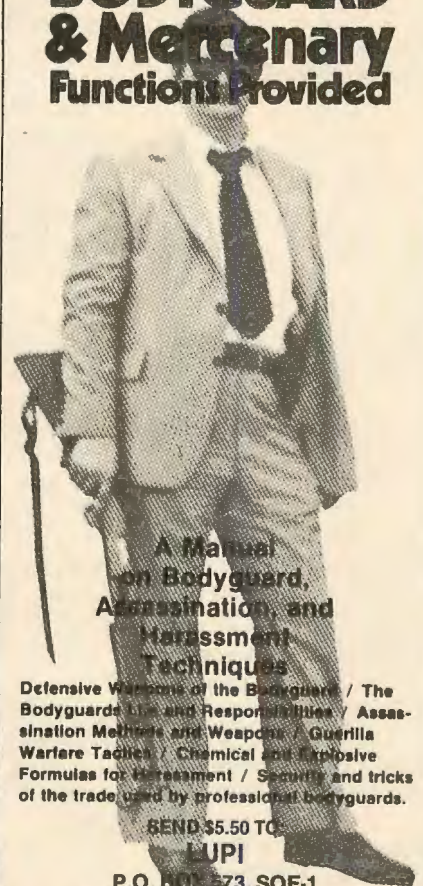
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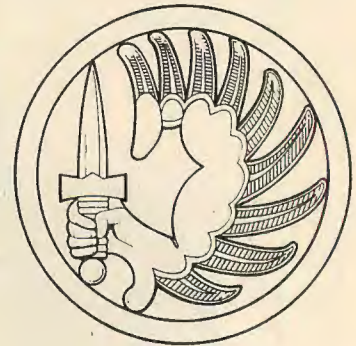
Continued from page 39

Sub-machine guns, C-4 plastic explosives, grenades, and even such crew-served weapons as anti-tank rifles are being stolen regularly from military bases and National Guard armories.

Some of these hauls are huge. In Fresno, Calif., more than 50 M-16s were stolen along with 2,000 rounds of ammunition and three grenade launchers in 1974. At the beginning of 1975, 100 M-16s disappeared from a Compton, Calif., armory.

Ominously, few, if any, of these weapons turn up during the commission of conventional crimes. This fact leads law enforcement officials to conclude they are being stock piled by extremists for future use.

In late November 1977, for example, the FBI arrested five self-avowed radicals on charges of possessing illegal explo-



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sives. The group claimed to be members of the Weather Underground and were charged with planning to blow up the offices of a California state senator.

Few facets of current-day law enforcement are so controversial as this move to paramilitary forces. Civil libertarians and other concerned citizens see this as a dangerous step, one that gives local government its own private army.

In their defense, lawmen say they can do nothing else but arm themselves in a manner that at least meets the level of the potential foe. Says a senior Los Angeles police officer, "Given the increasing threat of out-and-out terrorism in this country today, city officials have a moral if not legal obligation to provide for the protection of all its citizens." Because the level of terrorism in this country is going to increase, it can and must be met by SWAT-type organizations.



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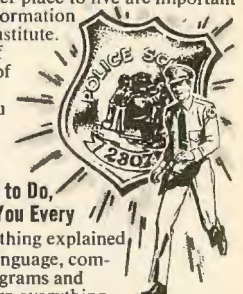
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# BAFT Raid In San Jose America's Gestapo In Action

by John Howard

It was something out of 1984. On June 3, 1978, at a legitimate public gathering—the San Jose Gun, Coin, and Antique Collector's Show—a loud, stern voice boomed over the public address system. At first the usual talking, laughing, and setting-up continued, until the voice grew louder and more threatening in tone.

Heads began to turn towards the voice and the large exhibit hall quieted as the 200 or so exhibitors began to realize that this was not the usual administrative announcement; nor was it a joke. The voice stated that the hall had been sealed off and that no one could leave or enter until "they" (over 40 ATF agents and Santa Clara County Sheriff's deputies) had finished their "informational mission." The exhibitors were also told to "have proper identification ready."

This was not a gathering of Mafia chieftains, Marxist bombers, or even wild, rioting demonstrators—it was a weekend gun and collector's show organized by a reputable individual who has been doing so for over 40 years. Those present were a variety of individuals both casually and professionally engaged in selling, trading, and collecting such items as military medals and insignia, World War I and II field equipment, historical items, technical manuals and books, jewelry, ammunition, and firearms.

After the announcement of what constituted a mass detention of innocent people, there were only two or three shouts of "Gestapo!," "Sieg Heil!," and such. Show manager Bill Wacker went on the PA system asking for calm and order.

He reluctantly reminded all that, "We always obey the law—let's do it now."

Everyone had been told to remain at his table and as they waited, there were flashes of strobes as ATF agents went about taking photographs of virtually every table containing a firearm of any type. They worked in pairs of one deputy and one ATF agent. Each pair had been assigned a section of tables and at each table they asked for the exhibitor's driver's license, recording the data on a clipboard. They then handed out a few pages of Xeroxed ATF regulations and local ordinances. Each person was told to sign for receipt of the papers.

*Not only did this happen to all those selling (or exhibiting) firearms and ammunition, but to every seller in the hall, including those selling Indian jewelry,*

*books, old uniforms, and other completely innocuous items!*

One young girl who collected and sold antique silver pieces resisted the request for ID. She told the agents that she was not doing anything illegal and that she couldn't see why she had to show her driver's license. The ATF agent and deputy "team" grew increasingly hostile as she continued her objections.

Finally, she was told that if she didn't "show ID right now, we'll come across that table, put you under arrest, and take

made between these "engaged in the business" of selling guns and ammunition, and those who were not.

The "informational" raid lasted for almost three hours during which time the ATF would not allow anyone to enter or leave the hall—including the public, many of whom were lined up outside waiting to get in!

The effect of this serious, massive violation of individual rights was varied.

One middle-aged custom engraver of wooden rifle stocks was shaken. "I gave



Man with blond hair, moustache, and dark shirt in center was identified as ATF undercover agent. He claimed to be "off duty," not spying on, nor entrapping persons at show.

you to jail!" The young girl, by now quite frightened, gave them her license. (One of these very courageous men was an obese ATF agent, Jim Smith.)

One seller, who specializes in selling only gun accessories like stocks, magazines, ammo pouches, and parts, occasionally brings in some of his fine collection of weapons solely for exhibition. As his picture was taken by the ATF, he asked why and as he questioned the agent, he was told very brusquely that, "We [the ATF] have had your name, your driver's license number, and a complete inventory of everything you sell."

All those with guns or ammunition on their tables were told by ATF that they must have a Federal Firearms License. If they produced one, the number was recorded. If they did not have one, they were told that they would not be warned "next time." No differentiation was

them my name and address—do you think they'll be coming to my house now?" He kept wondering aloud. "I spent a long time learning this [engraving], maybe I should get into something else . . ."

And this poor fellow's response was typical of many of the law-abiding, honest, hard-working people who had never before been treated as criminals. It was upsetting to those people—very upsetting—for although they had done absolutely nothing wrong or illegal, they now feared being arrested for unwittingly violating any of the long list of ambiguous ATF regulations and local ordinances which they had been coerced into signing for.

But there were those who were not intimidated. Bill Wacker, the show's organizer and a gun show producer for almost 40 years, called it a "sad day, a day I thought I'd never see in this country."



"Off-duty" ATF agent is confronted by show producer Bill Wacker, who asked him to confirm in front of SOF reporter that he was off-duty.

Many people were angry. One victim of the ATF mass internment stated, "I wish we had protested—we should have told them to come back with search warrants or to go to hell!" But he, like most, had been too stunned by the unprecedented ATF action to react properly.

Wacker and his attorney, Ron Day, have planned a legal counter-attack.

"We believe we were subjected to undue harassment," Day told SOF. "We want our constitutional rights defined not by ATF but by the courts, and we intend to pursue this matter in court."

A cash collection was made at the show for legal expenses and over \$1,400 was contributed. Wacker, president of the California Hunters and Gun Owner's Association, and attorney Ron Day, after consulting with the NRA's Institute for Legislative Action and others, have retained an attorney who specializes in ATF law. They now have plans for some very definite legal moves to prevent this from happening again.

The issues involved in the ATF's actions go far beyond the enforcement of Federal gun laws: To prevent totally innocent people from entering or leaving the hall for three hours; the demands for identification without any cause; the harassment and threats made against sellers of totally non-gun related items; the very overt picture taking; and the handing out of several pages of laws and regulations which had to be signed for—all of these actions very clearly go beyond the enforcement of Federal gun laws. What happened in San Jose was quite simply an attempt by the ATF to put an end to the gun shows in the San Jose-San Francisco area. Why else would they harass the non-gun exhibitors?

An incident which occurred at the next gun show a week later at the nearby Mt. View Gun Show gives a good picture of ATF's character and its dishonesty. The show is usually quite small, but this

week it was even smaller than usual with only 25 or so tables. Bill Wacker told SOF that attendance was down by about 50 percent which he attributed to ATF's actions the previous week. One man walking about the hall in casual clothing was recognized as an ATF agent. When approached, he admitted this fact, and he then explained emphatically that he was there on his own—not on official business—just to "explain our side" of ATF's actions the week before.

The agent was approached by a SOF reporter and although he refused to give his name, he continued to state in answer to very direct questioning that he was not there in any official capacity—just "on my own," he said repeatedly, to try and smooth things out.

When he was asked by SOF if he would be reporting back to his superiors on the mood and attendance at today's show, he replied, "Well, I might discuss it with some of the other guys in my office."

The visibly nervous agent was questioned by Bill Wacker, attorney Ron Day, this SOF reporter, and others. He made some very weak attempts to justify ATF's actions but it was apparent that he (like

Nervous ATF agent's cover is blown when two back-up agents drive to his "rescue," announcing that they have a call elsewhere. Judging by their comments, his claim to be "off-duty" was a lie. ATF harassment of citizens continues.

most ATF agents, who are usually those who wanted to be cops but could never pass a police exam or those who wanted to be civil service bureaucrats but who couldn't find an opening at the Post Office) was totally unequipped to either morally or legally defend ATF's Gestapo tactics. As we talked in the parking lot with this "off-duty," "just-here-on-my-own" ATF agent, his "cover" was blown when an unmarked ATF car pulled up with two other agents.

Apparently they had been on back-up duty and thought that their comrade was in trouble. I walked over to the car (the radios and red light were visible under the dash), identified myself as a reporter for SOF, and asked if they were ATF agents. They both said yes. I asked them if they were there on official business; they replied, "yes." When I asked for their names they refused and became nervous.

As I took their pictures, they shouted to their "off-duty" buddy, "Come on, we gotta go—we've gotta call!" The "off-duty" agent scurried into the back seat and they drove off.

ATF's official explanation for the mass detention and harassment at the San Jose show was that it had been necessary as the gun shows had become a "major source of weapons for militant groups and criminals." A source familiar with ATF tactics believes that their next move will be to send in undercover people to buy or sell weapons or ammunition from show participants and then make arrests. The idea is that the defendant can't later plead in court that he didn't know he was breaking the law, because ATF will have his photo and his signature attesting to having received copies of the laws.

What happened in San Jose can happen to any gun show anywhere—and it may happen to your show, if you let it happen.

A former police officer who has worked with ATF agents in the past gave this advice: "A very effective way to discourage ATF from raiding gun shows is simply to make it as unpleasant for them as possible. No violence or anything like that—nothing illegal. But when those agents come into a hall full of 'gun



nuts' let's face it, they're a bit nervous. Now if everyone started shouting at them—if all the people stormed to their feet, took their pictures, and just plain acted as ornery as possible, I can say for sure that it will scare the hell out of them. The ATF people are not cops, they're not used to dealing with crowds and such. The point is that if raiding gun shows becomes a very unpleasant task, they will give it up. Don't cooperate, don't be nice, don't make it easy for them. But," he warns, "don't do anything violent!"

Although attempts are underway to strike back at the ATF through the courts, the sad fact is that ATF is empowered to do what it did in San Jose by the authority given it in the 1968 Gun Control Act. The battle should not be against local ATF agents and bureaucrats who initiated the San Jose raid but against the laws which gave them their power. The strategic goal should be to reinstate the right of individuals to buy, sell, trade and bear arms by repealing or substantially modifying the 1968 GCA!

Did your Congressman and Senators vote for the 1968 GCA? Do they now support gun control? Find out and vote accordingly—before it's too late!

**SOF Editorial Comment:**

The reaction of the individuals to the violation of their rights as citizens

described in this article confirms what we have come to expect as the standard reaction of all U.S. citizens to encroachments on their freedoms: docile and unbelieving compliance with the "forces of authority." Like the Jewish people (and other minorities) who went docilely to their fates in Nazi Germany, enabling their captors to efficiently and bureaucratically exterminate them, the American citizens at the San Jose show allowed the BATF agents and sheriff's deputies to continue their work unhampered.

What if each person reacted as the author suggested in the article, by shouting or stamping his feet? Or what if many people approached each agent and asked him sincerely if he believed in doing what he was doing to his fellow citizens and neighbors?

The editors of SOF do not advocate violence, except as a last resort, but we do think that government agents involved in violations of our Constitutional rights should not be treated with courtesy or non-resisting acquiescence. Impress them with your sincerity, and point out that FBI agents who violated the Constitution and the law years ago are now being called to account. Ask them if they are willing to risk a trial for engaging in what could later be interpreted by the courts as un-Constitutional acts. If you or someone present has a

camera or tape recorder, take photos and record the conversations with ATF agents. Then publish the results wherever you can—as we at SOF have done here.

His argument that "he is just following orders" or just "doing his job" holds no water. Remember that the death camps in another, originally democratic society were run by underlings and bureaucrats who "were only doing their jobs" or were "just following orders." Courts, both American and international, have held the person following orders as guilty as the man giving orders when it comes to violation of rights.

As the author of the preceding article says, don't be violent, but resist. If you can't be a little aggressive, pushy, angry, or if you can't sincerely express your feelings of rage and disappointment to a government agent violating your rights, you don't deserve any. The time to fight is not when they get around to confiscating your particular gun (after you watched them take certain barrel lengths away, or handguns only, or shotguns only), but when anyone's right to keep and bear arms is threatened. And when agents ask or tell you to do something wrong, don't nervously comply, make them work to get what they want. Eventually they will have to give up the effort.



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Continued from page 28

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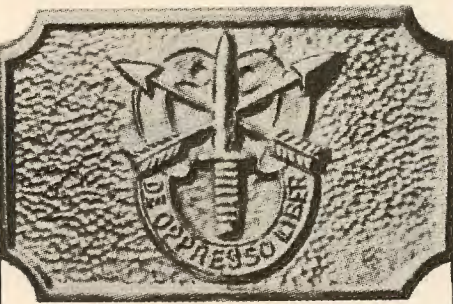
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